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K A T E V E R N O N .

A Tale.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

L O N D O N :

THOMAS CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,

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KATE VERNON.

CHAPTER I

CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON.

It would give a very false idea of Kate Vernon's character, were we to say that Captain Egerton's departure did not leave a blank in the quiet routine of her life. Indeed, she was rather surprised to find how closely he had linked himself with the pleasures and occupations of the secluded little circle amongst whom accident had thrown him. She missed his ready companionship, and the amusing

contrariety of his opinions and prejudices ; she missed the interested attention with which he listened to every word that fell from her lips, and her eye, peculiarly alive to beauty in every form, missed his distinguished, soldierly figure, and bold, frank, open face. But her regrets did not even border on the sentimental, and were spoken as openly as her grandfather's, who every hour in the day, for a week, at least, after his departure, might be heard to say—"If Fred Egerton was here, he would do this, or that, for me." In short, Kate had never dreamt of Egerton as a lover. Marriage was to her a distant possibility—desirable, certainly, in due time, as she always considered it, if happy, the happiest state of life ; but marriage with a soldier, who could not be always near her grandfather, was something so utterly beyond the powers of her imagination to conceive, that it gave her all the ease and security she might have felt with a brother.

So the winter wore steadily away. The morning's study—the afternoon walk with her grandfather—often to visit the sick and needy—the interchange of contrasting thought with Winter and the organist, kept Miss Vernon too wholesomely active both in mind and body to permit the pleasant monotony of her life to degenerate into stagnation.

But the half-hour in the evening, while her grandfather dosed, was the happiest portion of the day to her; when she leaned back in her chair gazing at the fire-light as it danced upon the wall and cast uncouth shadows, and, following some train of thought suggested by the reading, or occurrences of the day, dreamed of the future, or conjured up the past! And often did she feel surprise, at the frequent recurrence of the ball at Carrington—of Egerton's farewell—among these visions—though, at this point, she ever turned resolutely away.

Then Colonel Vernon was laid up for a month with a feverish cold, which made Kate

rather anxious, and banished every thought not connected with the invalid.

So came on the lengthening days' warmer sun, and more piercing winds of early spring; and one morning, towards the end of March, Mrs. O'Toole laid two letters before the Colonel; one directed to him in a clear, bold hand, bearing the Marscilles' post-mark, the other to Kate.

"I really think this is from Fred Egerton," said the Colonel, feeling in every pocket for glasses. "Kate, my dear! they were hanging round my neck before breakfast?"

"Oh! here they are, dear grandpapa," exclaimed she, eagerly; "do not mind looking at the outside—open it."

And she laid aside her own.

With many a break, and many a tantalising pause, the Colonel slowly doled forth Egerton's letter, it was short, and contained little more than a report of his safe arrival, after a tedious journey, many expressions of sincere regard,

and kind enquiries for his friends at A——, but breathed an indefinable tone of despondency, and restlessness of spirit, unlike anything they had hitherto observed in him.

The Colonel, at length, concluded, in a sort of surprised accent, as though he expected something more ; and Kate exclaimed —

“ Is that all ? Do you know, grandpapa, I expected much greater things from Captain Egerton’s first letter from India. Do you not think he writes dejectedly ? ”

“ I cannot quite make him out,” he replied, in an absent manner ; but I am obliged to him for his kind remembrance of us. We must tell Winter and Gilpin—he was such a favorite with them. Now open your despatch, my dear. I see it is from Georgina.”

“ Dearest Kate,” began Miss Vernon, in obedience to his commands, “ your last letter is now so ancient, I am ashamed to mention it—your first I did not answer because I was

too much vexed at your absurd opposition to all my plans for your benefit. Time has cooled my resentment, and accident has revived my affection for my pretty, loveable god-child, while it has, I hope, awakened in your mind proper regret for the folly of preferring a life of seclusion in a dull country town to the brilliant lot you might have secured. I forgive you, as I am sure you have punished yourself enough. The immediate cause of this letter is as follows. Mrs. Wentworth, one of my closest allies at Naples, told me, a brother of hers met a most exquisite personage, called Colonel Vernon, and an equally exquisite Miss Vernon at A——, I recognised the description, and immediately a vision of my happy girlish days at Dungar, and of all I owed to my kind and venerated cousin, rose before my mind ; and deep was the self-reproach, with which I thought of my long unpardonable neglect ! It is the life of unchecked prosperity I lead, that makes me thus thoughtless, thus inferior to

you, my bright-eyed recluse, in whose name I once promised and vowed the three things you have practised. I am what I am, and will feign nothing. I acknowledge, that tardy as this letter is, I doubt if I should have penned it, had not certain fleeting catspaws ruffled the smooth surface of my life, and showed me how slight are the bands that hold back the “dogs of war,” doubt, emptiness, and dissatisfaction ! I fear I am selfish, but nothing will do my heart so much good as the sight of your calm, sweet face, and the sound of your noble-hearted grandfather’s well-remembered voice—forgive me, I know how guilty I am, I feel I am most unworthy—yet, forgive me, and come ; leave the seclusion nature never intended for either. D’Arcy Vernon never refused me a request in those old times when I was all but a dependent on his bounty—I trust he will not now prevent me from employing some of the filthy lucre fortune has thrown in my way, in administering to my own enjoyment, by ac-

celerating your journey here. I have written so much longer than usual, I can add nothing of the charms intrinsic or extrinsic of fair Florence, to me it will be nothing if you refuse to come.

“Yours as warmly as ever,

“G. DESMOND.

“P.S.—Moore writes me word there has been a great search for some papers relating to the Knockdrum farm, I do not exactly understand what they want them for; some lawsuit that a Mr. Taaffe is engaged in, but you had better tell your grandfather.”

“What a charming letter!” cried Kate, as she concluded. “Is it not delightful, to read such a candid, warm-hearted acknowledgement of error? I am so glad to have heard from her at last. It is so dreadful to feel that

any chilling cloud of doubt intervenes between you and one you love!"

"Yes, indeed," said the Colonel ; "what a rash impulsive creature Georgy has ever been ! rushing into injustice one moment, and atoning for it with such graceful self-abasement the next ; it would be better if she could steer clear of both extremes ; but let me look at that postscript again ; she is as distinct as ladies usually are on legal subjects."

Kate handed him the letter, and he continued to read and re-read the postscript for some minutes, with a look of concentrated attention, then, raising his eyes and speaking more to himself than to his grand-daughter—

"I am astonished, that Moore has not written to me on this matter," he said, in a displeased tone. "If this Taaffe, be the nephew of old Arthur Taaffe, and the papers required, those connected with that judgment ;" he stopped abruptly, and sat for a few moments in deep thought, looking very grave. Kate

also kept a respectful silence, feeling little interest in any legal matter, till her grandfather rousing himself, and with his old contented look returning, observed, "no, no ! no man could act such a villainous part, he must be perfectly aware it was paid years ago."

"What was paid, grandpapa ?"

"That debt to old Taaffe ; he advanced my father money on Knockdrum, and got me to join in the bond, on which, of course judgments were entered against us both. I paid it years ago, and simply got an acknowledgement from him, but did not go through some other form, satisfying the judgment, I think they term it."

"Well, I am sure no one would ever doubt your word," cried Kate, "even if these papers cannot be found."

"I am afraid, my dear child, the great mass of legal and money-lending people do not come within the category of christians, who 'believe all things.' I must write to Moore this very

day, I'll be in time for the Irish post, give me my desk, Kate."

"But suppose this man insists on the production of these papers, and you cannot satisfy him?" asked Kate, as she was leaving the room after arranging the Colonel's writing materials.

He looked up with a sudden expression of pain in his noble, benevolent countenance.

"We shall be beggars, my child! that's all."

Miss Vernon walked into the drawing-room, and opened the piano mechanically; while her thoughts were busily engaged in conjecturing whether the lingering debility of indisposition, rather than justly grounded fears, prompted her grandfather's gloomy view of Lady Desmond's intelligence.

"Shall we then really know the poverty, nurse talks of? Shall I be strong enough to say, in sincerity, '*Thy will be done!*'"

But soon these gloomy speculations gave

place to the pleasanter topic of her cousin's invitation, which seemed to have escaped her grandfather's notice.

She had been *thus* meditating for some time, when nurse entered with a letter in her hand.

"The master's love, Miss Kate, and if it's not too early he'd like you to go out wid him, he says he does not feel so well!"

"Yes, nurse, I will go and get my bonnet and shawl, when I have settled this music."

"Faith now, alannah, I'm not plaised at all with the looks iv him!"

"How?" said Kate, suspending her occupation of replacing the books in the music-stand, and looking up anxiously in Mrs. O'Toole's face, which wore an unusual look of care, especially about the depressed corners of her expressive mouth.

"Sorra one iv me can tell why, but he looks like as when a big black cloud is beginin' to be dhrawn over the sun in a fine summer's day; he just sits in the chair tired like; an ses

he, 'only one letther for the post, nurse,' ses he, 'but be sure it's in time for the Irish maal,' and then he give me the message, I gave yes. The Cross iv Christ betune us an harum, ses I, as soon as I see 'J. Moore, Esquire,' on the letther ; how are we to have luck or grace when we have any thing to say to the man that sould Dungar, an give it up to the spalpeen that has it now ; look Miss Kate, thim's the Esquires that's going now ! Faith an I remember Paddy Moore, his father, carrying sacks iv corn to the mill, an meself own maid up at the big house ! Ay, then, J. Moore, Esquire, ye'r the first esquire in yer family, any ways, an there was ever an always sorra to sup when there was letthers goin back an forward betune you an the masther !"

"But, nurse, I have always heard that Mr. Moore was an upright honourable man, and I hope grandpapa's letter will be only productive of good."

"Well, well, may be so, but I'd a mighty

quare dhrame both last night an the night afore. Oh, ye may laugh now, Miss Kate, but no matther! I seen the masther as plain as I see yer own sweet face forenent me, slippin, slippin down a steep slim place^{esq} wid the say roarin mad ondher, an you houlding him for the dear life, an yer round white arms all strained an tremblin wid the weight that was too much for yez, an I couldn't help yez, tho' I struve an struve to run to yez; an in the struggle I woke up, all in a shake; an God forgive the word, but it's a mighty bad dhrame intirely!"

"No, Nurse—you say dreams go by contraries, so it is grandpapa that will be ascending some lofty eminence and dragging me after him."

"It was in the mornin', asthore, in the mornin' I dhreamt it."

"Never mind, nurse, if so, God will lend these slight arms strength for all that may be

required of them—do not tell me any more dreams now, I must go to grandpapa."

"Sweet Mary, shield ye darlint!" ejaculated Mrs. O'Toole, as she looked after her nursling, "but we've rested so long widout them thiev-ing attorneys, I don't like to see them beginin' their letthers agin. *J. Moore, esquire!* the divil go wid such esquires! amen.

Fearful and wonderful indeed is our spiritual organisation. Reason may smile at fears, unsubstantiated by any tangible motive, but the instant her accents of reproof have ceased, lo! the same formless and gnawing terror steals back, undiminished by one iota of its influence, to depress the soul, until again routed by reason's disciplined troops; a true guerilla warfare in which the irregular forces, ever ready to disperse and reassemble, always repulsed, but never conquered, are sure to wear out resistance in the end.

So Kate Vernon, in spite of her clear and

cultivated intellect, her sound judgment, and her sense of the ridiculous, could not keep nurse's evil omen from dwelling on her mind ; more, ay, a thousand times more, than her grandfather's apparent anxiety about the intelligence communicated by Lady Desmond, and they accomplished the circuit of the walls, silently, or, exchanging occasional remarks very foreign from the subject occupying both their minds.

At length the Colonel said abruptly—

“ Kate, my child, what do you think of Lady Desmond's invitation ?”

“ Oh ! I think it a delightful plan ; but you, grandpapa, do you think we shall be able to accept it ?”

“ At present decidedly not. I must not be farther from Dublin than I am—I fear I shall have much letter writing, if indeed I am not obliged to go to Ireland myself ; if matters come right again, I shall certainly endeavour

to let the Priory, and take you to Italy ; this complete retirement is not good or safe."

" Safe !" said Kate, laughing. " Why I thought it was quite *selon les regles*, of all romances, that a dethroned prince, and his lovely and interesting daughter, like you and I, should be safe only while in obscurity.

" According to old romances, I grant ; but according to reality, there is more danger in the strong contrasts which the occasional breaks in a life of retirement present, in the tone of mind it engenders, than in the action of society, at least to you, Kate."

" Danger ! Oh, tempt me not to boast," cried Kate, endeavouring to draw her grandfather from his moralising mood. " You may despise old romances, but you are nevertheless assuming the tone of some melancholy Count Alphonso, warning a sensitive and angelic Lady Malvina, against the world in general : dearest and best," she continued, in graver and

tenderer tones, “I must swim down the troubled current of life, as you have done before me, and meet its difficulties and trials—leave me then to the same guide by whose aid, you have passed many a dangerous rapid safely, to float in a smooth, though diminutive haven at last.”

“ You are right, Kate, quite right ; but how much longer the smoothness will last, God only knows.”

“ Well, there *is* a God, to know all, and direct all, and that consciousness, must rob the future of all apprehension. Shall I write to Lady Desmond, on our return, and tell her of our indecision and its causes ?”

“ By all means. Yet, dear child, I wish *you* would accept her invitation, you want change, and I could remain quite comfortably with nurse and—”

“ Do not utter such treason ! Leave you ! and to amuse myself in Italy, when there is a

chance that so far from being able to do without me, you may peculiarly want me."

" My dear, dear, unselfish child."

" Not a bit unselfish—*tout au contraire*. I should be miserable away, besides—but here are our friends, Winter and Gilpin, so, dearest grandpapa, leave the future to take care of itself; all will be arranged for the best."

There was no time to say more, as the painter and organist approached ; but though the Colonel made no reply, some unexplained current of feeling induced him to pass his arm through Kate's, instead of offering it, as was his habit, for her support.

" Ha ! Miss Vernon, I see you have taken advantage of a stray gleam of sun, to seduce the Colonel into risking another cold—the wind is truly detestable, but as I could not keep Gilpin in doors, I came out with him, he has not a grain of prudence !"

" My dear Winter, it is a remarkable fine

day for March, I am glad, Gilpin, you felt equal to a walk."

"I think you look better," observed Kate.

"Yes: I think I am better, I feel to revive at the approach, however boisterous, of spring."

"*Cospetto!* three months in Italy would make you a new man; but here, the great mystery to me is, how any one who catches a cold ever loses it."

"The remedy is worse than the disease; imagine a depressed invalid in a strange country, without a single friend, or, even acquaintance, and ignorant of its language," returned Gilpin.

"Wretched indeed! but wait for me, Mr. Gilpin, we have some thoughts of taking a flight to Italy, this summer," said Miss Vernon.

"*Corpo di Baccho!* I'll not be left behind: to act as Miss Vernon's *cicerone*, would be

something more than commonly delightful—what a state of enjoyment you would be in ; but what put such a move into your head, Colonel ?”

“ An invitation from Lady Desmond, who is at Florence,” said Colonel Vernon, “ Our acceptance of it however is very uncertain, though I see Kate is full of the project. I had another letter, Messieurs, which I think will give you pleasure—here ; read it, Winter.”

“ Bombay—Fred Egerton—*che gusto.*”

A quick glance at Kate. The whole party moved slowly towards Abbey Gardens, the Colonel and Winter, who read the letter aloud, and Gilpin close behind with Kate.

“ *Ad ogni uccello suo nido è bello,*” said Winter, as he concluded the epistle, “ here am I shivering and pining for a warm sun, which many years’ custom has made natural to me, and there is that young scape-grace, revelling in baths, and slaves, and sunshine, dying to be back among east winds and consumption !”

“ Captain Egerton does not forget his friends —as soldiers are said to do,” said Gilpin.

“ Pooh, pshaw ! cried Winter, “ he was bored by a bad sea voyage ; sea-sickness is at the bottom of half the the sentimental adieu to my native shores, that you read in albums and annuals, wait until he gets among his tiger-shooting brother officers, or the Bombay belles, he’ll soon forget the sum-total of all he left behind—stuff !”

“ I do not quite agree with you, Mr. Winter,” replied Kate. “ I think Captain Egerton will always remember our little circle, kindly, and be delighted to see any member of it again. Beyond this we have no right to expect ; he would not charge his memory with regrets for people, who do not let his absence interfere with their pleasures or occupations.”

“ Bravo, Miss Vernon ! if he was some worthy curate, in a white tie and spectacles, you would not bustle up so warmly in his defence ; but a handsome light dragoon, with

moustache, and a long sword and spurs, and saucy 'make way for me look,' is another affair."

"Wrong again, Mr. Winter," said Kate. "I see no reason why a Lancer's cap may not cover as good qualities, as a clerical broad-brim—and I have been too long your pupil, not to appreciate form and color."

"Good; and if every Lancer was like Captain Egerton, I, for one, would prefer trusting them, even in a confessional, to the white neck-clothed curates," chimed in the organist.

"In truth, though Egerton is the type of a class I have always disliked, I cannot help liking him—especially when I think of his—pooh, pooh—I was forgetting—" And Winter stopped abruptly.

"You are mysterious," said the Colonel. "but let me see the *Times*, at your house; I want to read the Indian news, that came by the last mail; and to see Mrs. Winter."

"Do you really think you will go to Italy, Miss Vernon?" asked Gilpin.

“I fear it is problematical. I long to travel; but grandpapa has some business, and nurse has had a dream, which bodes evil for my wishes.”

“Oh, the dream ought not to be classed with the business,”

“I dare confess to you, and to you only,” returned Kate, with a smile, “that it seems to shake my hopes far more than the business.”

“The philosophic Miss Vernon—superstitious!”

“No, no! yet, you know—

‘It may be a sound,
A tone of music, summer’s eve, or spring;
A flower, the wind, the ocean, which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we’re darkly bound.’”

“Winter would say it was the east wind.”

“Perhaps so,” said Miss Vernon, “for alas! how ignominiously physical are the causes of

many a tenderly poetic mood! not that I am at all addicted to such, but—”

“I think it is a mistake to consider everything physical, as despicable,” observed Gilpin; “we hear of mere physical force, mere physical wants; but the same hand made and blended our two natures, and we shall be happy and healthy, in proportion as we train both to work in harmony, without giving undue preference to either.”

“I often think we have a species of trinity within us,” said Miss Vernon. “We have sense with all its powerful tendencies in one direction, and spirit with its aspirations in another, while the heart and its affections seem to be neutral ground, where the claims of both may be adjusted.”

“I like the fancy; but sense gets the upper hand in many a heart.”

“No,” interrupted Kate, “the heart may be destroyed in the struggle, but while it exists, the spirit always has fair play.”

“ Your sentence is too sweeping ; in all such warfare, the variations are so delicately shaded that—”

“ Walk in, Colonel,” broke in Winter ; “ never mind if Mrs. Winter is in or not ; Gilpin, we’ll have some Scotch broth for luncheon, that will set you up. I give you no choice—in you must come.

“ Sense must carry the day, Mr. Gilpin,” said Kate, smiling.

* * * *

Some days elapsed after this conversation before a reply from Mr. Moore reached the Colonel ; and the anxiety he and Kate had experienced, died away into a half-forgetfulness.

It is strange how events, which at first strike us with such keen force, lose their sharpness of outline as the mind becomes accustomed to what was at first a novel aspect of

affairs ; and, as nothing fresh arises, we gradually sink back into our former frame of mind, or recur to that which distressed it, in momentary spasms of anxiety.

So Kate and her grandfather had quite recovered their usual serenity, and the former had written to Lady Desmond, long and affectionately ; rejoicing that the cloud which had for a while interposed between them, had been dispersed ; merely mentioning the obstacle to their journey, as a temporary annoyance, and speaking of its removal as a matter of certainty.

But she did not allude to it when in conversation with the Colonel, as she fancied he avoided the subject.

Such was their frame of mind when, at the usual post hour, one morning, Mrs. O'Toole entered.

“ A letter for the master,” a large, blue, pitiless looking envelop, such as emanate from attorneys’ and merchants’ offices, implacable places, sacrificial alters, where youth and

joy, tenderness and the pleasant amenities of life are immolated at the shrine of the English juggernaut “business.”

The Colonel, keeping his eye fixed on it, felt in his pockets for his spectacles, silently, with a certain determination of manner, very different from the joyous confusion with which he sought for them, when opening Fred Eger-ton’s letter ; then with a loud hem, as if he wished to clear both throat and brains, he tore open the missive.

Kate sat opposite gazing at him, as if she could read the contents through his countenance ; and although that morning she had risen with the full conviction that the anticipated letter would only prove their anxiety to be groundless, she now felt the terrible, creeping, gnawing, sickening sensation of doubt and dread which makes the hand so cold, and the eye so dim, when felt in its full force.

This however was her first and but slight ex-perience of care, so she sat quite still, not know-

ing of what she thought, until her grandfather had turned over the second page of the rather lengthy epistle ; and she could see the flourishing signature at the end of it. Still the Colonel did not speak, but turned back to re-read some passage, and Kate was surprised to find she had not courage to ask " what news ? "

At last her grandfather without looking up, handed her the letter, observing—

" Much what I ought to have anticipated ; read it, my dear."

Kate, with a sensation of extreme repugnance, took the letter and read as follows :—

" Dublin, March 27th, 18—.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" In reply to yours of the 21st inst., on the subject of Lady Desmond's communication to Miss Vernon, it is true that the present Mr. Taaffe has raised the question as to whether the debt to his uncle was paid ; seeing,

on searching the records, that the judgments securing it remain unsatisfied on the roll. But, as I concluded you got warrants to satisfy them, at the time of the payment, I was not uneasy on the subject, and thought it unnecessary to trouble you until I should first search amongst your papers in my possession for them, which, as yet, I have not done, as the matter was not pressing. If, however, you did not get the necessary warrants to satisfy, as I begin to apprehend was the case from the tenor of your letter, I fear we shall have some trouble, as the present Mr. Taaffe affects to consider himself bound to conclude the debt was not paid ; and obliged, in his character as executor of his late uncle, to call it in, altho' he knows, in his heart, (as I firmly believe), the contrary. I trust, however, although you may not, (from your unacquaintance with law terms and forms) recollect what sort of acknowledgment you got at the time, it will turn up to be a warrant to satisfy, or, if not, some docu-

ment sufficient to induce a court of equity to stay any proceedings Mr. Taaffe may be advised to institute at law, on foot of the judgment.

“ You had better search diligently among your papers and send me whatever you find, at all affecting this matter, and in the mean time I will search also amongst those of yours in my possession.

“ With respectful compliments to Miss Vernon, I remain, my dear sir, your faithful and obedient servant,

“ J. MOORE.

“ To Colonel Vernon, &c.”

Kate's first feeling was that of indignant scorn at such, to her imagination, unheard of villainy as that recorded in the letter she had just perused ; but she suppressed the expression of it, in order to put the least gloomy view of the matter, her simple sense presented, before her grandfather.

“After all it is not so bad,” she said, “you see, Mr. Moore, only anticipates, ‘some trouble,’ and surely there can be no doubt your word would be taken, especially in Ireland, before any other man’s oath !”

“My dear Kate, ‘*some trouble*,’ has a very vague meaning from a solicitor ; it may be a month’s quibbling or forty years’ litigation ; and in law there is no such thing as honour ; every thing must be proved ; and though judge and jury may believe me incapable of wronging Mr. Taaffe of one sou ; yet, if I cannot bring *legal proof*, he must succeed.”

“What a dishonest wretch he must be ! but I always had a horror of the name of Taaffe !” cried Kate, the proud, indignant blood mounting to her forehead.

“Some association of ideas with Taffy’s thieving propensities ?” observed the Colonel, with an effort to be cheerful.

“But, dear grandpapa, what is to be done ?

this letter leaves us just in the same state of uncertainty we were in before."

"We must search amongst all my papers, dear child, as Moore advises ; if I find any thing bearing on the subject, I will send it to him ; but I much fear I shall find nothing ; I destroyed a great many papers, as useless, on leaving Dungar, and although I do not recollect any connected with Taaffe's business among them, there may have been ; for I considered it so completely settled beyond dispute, that I should have burnt them, unhesitatingly, had I come across any. And then, Kate, we must bide our time."

"And are there no more active steps to be taken ? Could you not write to this nephew ; assure him you have paid the money, and advise him not to expose himaelf to universal approbrium by acting so base a part."

"Ah, Kate, my own warm hearted child!" said her grandfather, sadly, "God grant you

may not have to struggle with the world of which you are so ignorant." Universal opprobrium," is an expression frequently and flourishingly put forth by newspaper editors ; and it may be occasionally drawn down by the singularly flagrant acts of some public characters, but the dread of it never yet withheld any man, so inclined, from preying on his fellows in private life ; and it will take many more years' experience to convince you how utterly fruitless and unorthodox such a proceeding would be."

" Well, grandpapa, if I am useless as a counsellor can I not be an agent and assist you in your search."

" Yes, send away the breakfast things and tell nurse to bring me the tin box, and oak brass-bound cabinet that are in my room ; make Susan help her, they are too heavy for her unassisted strength."

True to his character, D'Arcy Vernon had

room in his heart to think for another, though borne down by the weight of a deeper anxiety than he had ever felt before. His former reverse of fortune, obliged him to renounce the pomps and vanities of high life, and soon custom proved them to be, trifles indeed; but here was a question involving the possibility, nay he could scarcely hide it from himself, the probability of beggary.

“Athen, mavourneen; it’s the sore heart’s within me this day to be carryin down thim onlooky boxes; sure, I ses to meself the minit I set eyes on that big baste iv a blue letther, faith mee dhrame’s out sure enough; an it’s not for the likes iv mee to be spoken to quolity, but it was just on the tip iv mee tongue to say ‘throw it in the fire, Kurnel jewel, an don’t meddle or make with the likes iv it at all, at all.’ Sure I knew at onceet it kem from Moore’s place, be the look iv it. Oh, what was in it, good or bad Miss Kate, avourneen?”

Nurse was too old and devoted a friend to be

excluded from the family councils, and Miss Vernon was too well acquainted with her affectionate self-forgetful nature to consider her question intrusive.

“Only some business, dear nurse; it may be troublesome or may not, but cannot be avoided, even by your good advice; so just bring down the boxes, and you shall hear more when I have more to tell, and, nurse,” turning back from the dining-room door, “should Mr. Winter or Mr. Gilpin, or any one call, you had better say that grandpapa and I are particularly engaged.”

“The Lord look down on me!” soliloquised Mrs. O’Toole, as she crossed herself, with an air of alarm, “not see Winther nor the crather iv an Organist. Faith there is throuble gotherin sure enough, I knew be the darlint’s two eyes there was throuble in her heart this week past; sure we were too long quiet an happy, that thim divils iv attorneys should remember us. I’ll go bail, it was thim that druv

the captin off to that murtherin hot counthry, an I thinkin he an mee sweet child id make it up betune thim. The masther's as innocent as a lamb, but lave ould nurse alone for seein as far into a mill stone as her naybors ow wow ; many a time, I seen him takin the full iv his eye, out iv her, an I removin the tay things. Och ! bud it's the wearisome world ! Susy yer idle gowk, are ye goin to lave me to pull the arrums out of mee, liftin a ton weight here, widout puttin a finger to help me ?"

And diligently did the Colonel and his granddaughter untie, read, and examine, and re-tie the numerous bundles of papers and letters.

Now a packet in Lady Desmond's clear firm writing was laid aside, now a smaller one in Kate's own hand ; rapturous letters, describing the enjoyments of her memorable visit to London, the only time she had ever been away from her grandfather ; now turning over large

yellow parchments, with red seals hanging from them, now eagerly examining a pile of papers whose crabbed writing bespoke business. It was weary work ; Kate, with all the hopeful energy of youth, rapidly searching through each of the packets at all likely to contain a solicitor's letter, and handing them to her grandfather, who, latterly, leaned wearily back in his chair, and examined them languidly. Once his arm stole round her, as she knelt beside the pile of papers on the floor, and she felt how eloquent of despondency, was the close embrace with which he held her to him ; but she constrained herself to receive it in silence, and took no further notice than to kiss, warmly, the hand which pressed her to his heart, as the last and best treasure left him.

“ You are tired and cold,” said she, rising, “ I will stir the fire, and then, come and put your feet on the fender, and I will replace these

packets we have examined in the box, and open all Lady Desmonds' letters, some such paper may have got among them."

"As you like, as you like, my dear child."

There was a long silence, broken only by the rustling of the papers. Half an hour elapsed, and at length Vernon, rousing himself, said—

"Do not tire yourself longer, give me my desk, I had better tell Moore there is not a symptom here of what we want."

"Wait a very little longer, there is only one packet more, of Georgina's; let us not give up too soon, dear grandpapa." A few minutes after she came over to him with an old-looking letter in her hand. "This is signed, 'A. Taaffe,' look at it."

Vernon took it eagerly.

"Ha, this may be useful, how could it have got among Georgina's letter?"

Kate read over his shoulder.

“Anne Street, June, 23, 18—.

“ DEAR SIR,

“ I have just received yours of the 21st, with its enclosure, many thanks for your obliging efforts to comply with my wishes.

“ I have directed my solicitor to prepare the necessary warrants, they will be ready by Monday or Tuesday at farthest, when I will execute them and send them to you,

“ Your obliged and obedient servant,

“ A. TAAFFE.

“ To Colonel Vernon, &c.”

“ Victoria ! Dearest of grandfathers will not that utterly annihilate Mr. Taaffe ?”

“ Well, I think it must be sufficient ; thank Heaven, my love, you thought of searching among Georgy’s letters ; now I must write im-

mediately, to Moore, and I have scarce time. You can put away all these papers."

With a lightened heart Kate prepared to obey, and so visible was the change from darkness to light, in her countenance, that nurse exclaimed, on receiving from her the letter for the post.

"Faith, an sure, Miss Kate, you've been makin the masther tell Misther Moore to hold his prate an lave off pinin' any more of his three an four pinnys to him."

"No; not exactly that nurse, but I think we shall soon have done with him."

"The Lord send! And I forgot to tell ye, Mr. Winther called; an faith, I could hardly keep him from walkin' in, widout 'by yer lave or wid yer lave,' an thin he kim back wid that bit iv a note."

"Thank you, now run to the post-office, dear nurse. An invitation to tea from Mr. Winter," said Kate, returning to the dining-room, where the Colonel was putting away

his writing materials. "Do you feel equal to it?"

"Decidedly, my dear—I want to have a little kindly, honesty, after having had a scoundrel before my mind's eye all the morning; we will go and have a rubber, and a song. How poor Egerton used to enjoy our little parties."

"And how much more he would enjoy horse-whipping, Mr. Taaffe," cried Kate, as she locked the tin box.

"I believe he would," said the Colonel, laughing. "You and Egerton certainly understood each other."

CHAPTER II.

UNCERTAINTY.

WELCOME indeed was the gleam of hope, afforded by this discovery, to the Colonel and Kate.

To their non-legal minds, it appeared that any acknowledgment of money received, was sufficient, although no sum was mentioned ; and Kate even felt remorse for her hasty condemnation of Mr. Taaffe ; as she concluded the production of the newly found letter, would settle the question at once, and for ever, and draw forth an humble apology from the offender ; her spirits rose even above their

usual height, and overleaping, with the sanguine vivacity of her age and race, all intervening probabilities, she revelled in her anticipated visit to Italy, and spent many a pleasant half-hour in endeavouring to overcome nurse's inveterate antipathy to "thim rampagin divils, the Frinch" (under which name she classed all foreign nations and foreigners), and in exercising her powers of persuasion to induce the Winters and Gilpin to join in the pilgrimage.

" You know we would not travel in any extravagant style, *Caro Maestro*," she said, to Winter, as they were enjoying an April day, which seemed to have borrowed the balmy air of early summer. They had crossed the ferry, and were strolling side by side, her tall, graceful form, and elastic step, contrasting strongly with his stout puffy figure.

" You had better tie a knapsack on your shoulder at once, and trudge it—hump ! ha ! not so fast if you please—you walked me up that hill at a killing pace.

“ But seriously—let us consider the best method of setting to work, for you cannot think how eagerly I look forward to the journey ; and if we go cheaply to work, Mr. Gilpin might join us, and—”

“ *Signorina Carrissima*, yes ! I want to speak seriously,” replied Winter, in a kinder accents than usual. “ Are you not too sanguine about this journey, You make too little of the law’s uncertainties. Mr. Moore’s letters seem to promise well, as you read them. Your grandfather and I see only, and at best, the promise of a long, perhaps ruinous litigation. I felt so convinced that this will be the case, that, from the first, I strongly advised Colonel Vernon to endeavour to effect a compromise. It is true you have not much to divide, but remember *chi lascia il poco per haver l’assai nè l’uno nè l’altro avera mai*,”. I see I am acting as usual like a brute,” he continued, thickly. “ I intended to say all this by degrees, and tenderly—but I plunged into it at last too

abruptly. My dear child, it cuts me to the heart, to hear you anticipating such unalloyed enjoyment, and forming such plans, when perhaps the reverse is before you ; and I fancy your grandfather feels somewhat as I do, though he is more sanguine than I am."

They walked on a few paces, in silence—Kate's color varying, and her heart, after feeling, for a second or two, to stand still (at this sudden and rude shock, to her bright dreams), throbbing as though it would burst its prison.

" *Bella mia*, dear child, are you angry with me ?" cried Winter anxiously. " Why do you not speak ?"

" Simply, kind friend," returned she, putting her arm through his, " because I could not—angry with you ? no ; I am obliged to you," she added, with an effort to smile. " And now tell me all you think, and what we ought to do."

" Humph ! you *are* a good girl ; you see, my dear, it is more than a month since this busi-

ness began ; if it could have been settled quickly, it would be settled before this, and successful or unsuccessful, a chancery suit is ruin. There, you had better know it all."

" And are we absolutely embarked in this ruinous course ?" asked Kate, faintly.

" Ifear so. Did you not see Moore's last letter."

" No ; grandpapa said there was nothing new in it."

" Ha ! a mistaken tenderness ; there certainly was nothing new in it ; but the plot thickens ; and, I fear there is no ease at present, to preven Mr. Taaffe proceeding to revive the judgment, and ultimately obtain a receiver over your grandfather's remaining property."

" A receiver—what for ?"

" To receive the rents in payment of the debt, if debt there be,"

" What, all of them ?"

" Yes all ; but, do not be too much cast down, remember you have, few, but friends sincere ; who will stick by you, and—"

“Dear Mr. Winter, let us be silent for a moment, I want to collect my thoughts.”

They walked on in silence for some time.

“Then from what you tell me, before long we may be left quite penniless ! Are you sure that this is a true picture of our case ? and that your hatred of law does not color it !”

“Heaven grant your conjecture may be right,” cried Winter. “I only tell you my own, and I think your grandfather’s, real view of the matter. I have been long wishing for an opportunity to do so. I dreaded the effect of the shock on your sensitive and imaginative nature, and intended to have broken it to you gradually.”

“But,” continued Kate, not noticing the latter part of his speech, “shall we have nothing left ? no money at all ! good God ! And grandpapa, what am I to do for him—and nurse ? Do not think me very weak, but I cannot help the terror I feel.”

“Miss Vernon, I vow to Heaven, I only

intended just to prepare you a little for the worst ; perhaps matters may not be so bad as your alarmed imagination paints. My great object in speaking thus to you is to show the necessity for endeavouring to effect a compromise, or at least, to come to some understanding with your grandfather as to future plans, you cannot look about you too soon ; I know the first shock of a thing of this kind is terrible —but you are not one of those cowards who defer looking danger in the face, until it is too late.”

“ Yes, I know, but what plan can we possibly think of, if we are to have all our money taken from us, what are we to do ?”

“ Dear child, be prepared for it. I would in the first place, begin at once to curtail every possible outlay—look out for a tenant for the Priory. Take a smaller, humbler abode, or, a thousand times better, make our house your home, till matters are more decided.”

“ Always kind and good,” murmured Kate,

“ and there is nothing more you would suggest ?”

“ No ; except to speak freely of it all to the Colonel, and, by so doing, creep into his complete confidence.”

“ Oh ! Mr. Winter,” cried Kate, with an irrepressible burst of tears, “ and is this to be his end ? I always hoped that something, I knew not what would happen to restore him to his old position ; and now to think of his being obliged to live and end his days in some mean and unsightly place.”

“ Courage Kate—you know not what good may be hidden up in store for you, behind this sterner dispensation ; I have experienced severe poverty, and I tell you, none but those who have felt it, can know how few, how simple, and yet, how satisfying are the wants and pleasures of life.”

“ For you and I, yes ; but for grandpapa, at his age, after youth and manhood spent in the

possession and enjoyment of wealth and a dignified proposition."

"If I mistake not, Colonel Vernon's greatest concern will be on your account, and if he sees you content, or at least, resigned, he will be the same."

"Well, we can say no more now; I feel how necessary it was, I should be roused from my false security, and that you have acted as a true friend in undertaking, what I know, must have been so painful a task. I must try and think clearly and deeply; and will speak to you about my cogitations; meanwhile, as we shall soon be home, let us change the subject, and I will endeavour to recover my serenity before I meet grandpapa."

Winter pressed the hand she held out to him, with a feeling of sincere respect and admiration, for the manner in which she had borne his communications, and an earnest wish that the platform, at the next Jews' meeting,

might prove insecure, and so open the ranks of the peerage to Fred Egerton—

“Though,” he added, mentally, “there is no knowing the effects of prosperity on him.”

Is grandpapa at home, nurse?” asked Kate.

“No, miss, he said he felt lonesome, and walked out to see Mr. Gilpin.”

Thankful for a few minutes’ solitary reflection, she ran to her room, and hastily fastening the door, threw herself into a chair—not to think, that would be by no means a correct term to apply to the confusion of ideas, and images, which presented themselves to her mind; some most foreign to the subject of the conversation with Winter. Dungar, and her early days, with their bright anticipations rose painfully clear before her eyes—the dreadful possibility of seeing her grandfather in poverty—and the insurmountable difficulty of making nurse understand the necessity for retrenchment—the distressing consciousness of the

necessity to think deeply, struggling with the impossibility of fixing her thoughts ; and a dim feeling that an impassable barrier was about to be raised between her and the class of which Fred Egerton was a representative.

All these and a thousand more undefined, shadowy, outlines swept across her mind, while she sat so still that she felt the throbbing of her heart, as if echoed in her head, and she could almost almost hear the pulses that vibrated through her slight frame.

Frightened at this continued rebellion of her thoughts, against her will, she threw herself on her knees, silently laying the painful chaos before the Almighty ruler and searcher of hearts !

“ If accepted as coming from God,” she murmured, “ and therefore good, nothing is unbearable, Mr. Gilpin says, and he is right ; perhaps we may succeed in this business after all, though I feel quite hopeless, after what Mr. Winter has said—but if we have no

money, could I not earn it? I have a good knowledge of music — ah, delightful! how proud I should be, to earn it for grandpapa, who has always taken such care of me ; and nurse would not mind it much. I like teaching. Ah! we may be happy yet—I must speak to Mr. Winter about it. Ah! nurse's dream may come true, but by contraries, after all; who can tell what strength love, and God's good help may lend even to these weak arms," and she stretched them out. "Enough to support dear grandpapa, perhaps—that would be a proud achievement!" she said almost aloud, as a feeling of quiet courage swelled her heart.

She proceeded to bathe her eyes and make her simple toilette, interrupted, it is true, by a delicious vision that would intrude itself, of Fred Egerton wealthy and powerful, flying to save her and hers, and interposing the shield of his affectionate care between them and every earthly ill ; in vain she chided herself for

so far-fetched a thought ; instinctively she felt how readily and rapturously he would perform such a part ; and however impressively she told herself shew as absurd and visionary the idea would return. It was the nearest approach to love that had ever connected itself with him in her mind, and his image, once invested with this hue, never again lost it.

There has been so much said, and said with eloquence, pathos and truth, of the heroism of every day life, that I fear to approach ground already so well occupied ; yet I cannot pass, in silence, the resolution with which Kate calmed herself to meet her grandfather at dinner ; and, her attention now fully roused, preserved that composure even while observing a thousand minute indications of despondency, which cut her to the heart.

“ Shall I speak to him of business to-night ? ” she asked herself more than once ; anxious to begin that line of conduct which Winter had pointed out to be her duty ; and, each time as

she looked at the worn expression of that beloved and venerated face, her heart answered, “No, not to-night, let him have a good night’s rest, and to-morrow, to-morrow, I will unflinchingly approach the subject.”

So she brought him his footstool and moved his chair to the right angle with the fire.

“Are you quite well darling?” said he, gazing up at her as she arranged a cushion at his back, “I thought you looked pale at dinner.”

Ah! Fred Egerton, dashing and fearless as you are, could you brave danger and death with nobler courage than that which steadied Kate’s voice, when, instead of yielding to the almost irresistible inclination to throw herself into her grandfather’s arms and pour forth passionate and tearful assurances, that, come what may, there was a world of inexhaustible love and energy, all his own in her heart, she said gently, but with a certain cheering steadiness—

“ Well, always quite well, dear grandpapa. Now take a nice sleep.”

“ God bless you, Kate.”

Seating herself, book in hand, in the window, away from the fire, for which the evening was almost too warm, but which the Colonel could not not bear to give up, she gazed long and fixedly at the river, and the broken bank, the fields, the copse, and an orchard to the right, now one sheet of blossom; the sturdy old oak, which had looked like a rugged skeleton all the winter, now bursting into leaf; at the general flush of delicate, yellowish green which seemed to pervade all vegetable nature; yet the gradual close of evening, beautiful as it was, impressed her with a feeling of sadness, partly caused by the emotions of the day, and partly by the mournful tenderness, which is so often and so strangely induced, by the contemplation of coming night in early spring.

As Kate sat leaning her head against the window frame, her book hanging negligently

from her hand, thinking of the rich autumn scene this view had presented, when Fred Egerton sketched it for her, some little bustle outside the drawing-room door attracted her attention, it was opened, and nurse announced,

“Mister and Missis Winther, Miss Kate.”

Seldom had visitors been more heartily welcome, their coming was an inexpressible relief to Kate, and helped her well over the evening she had almost dreaded.

Few in this trying world of ours, do not know that there are times when a *tête-à-tête* with the person we love most on earth is an ordeal we would fain escape; when we shun the slightest expression of tenderness, lest it should betray the deep and yearning affection which swells the heart with sadness, not for ourselves, but for those for whom no sacrifice would seem painful, could we but save them them from suffering.



“Shall I brush yer hair asthore ?” said Mrs. O’Toole, as she followed Kate into her room.

“No, dear nurse, only I want a little rest.”

“There’s a shadow on yer face, darlint, an wont ye spake it out to yer own ould nurse, that held ye in her arms an ye a dawshy little craythure, widout a mother. May be, it’s bad news of the Captin ?”

“Of the Captain ! No, we have heard nothing of him ; but, good night, I will tell you all to-morrow, dear nurse—I am weary now.”

Kate might have spared herself the anxious thoughts that kept her waking, as to how she should approach the painful subject of their difficulties with her grandfather. It was done for her rudely enough, by a letter from Mr. Moore, announcing in legal terms, the appointment of a receiver over their remaining property.

She knew by the rigidity with which the Colonel’s left hand grasped the arm of his

chair as he read ; that some more than usual bad news was contained in the letter.

“ I must see Winter,” said he, after a short pause, “ I must see him immediately,” he repeated, rising.

“ If there is bad news, had you not better tell me first, dear grandpapa,” said Kate, boldly and calmly.

“ My dear child, you are unfit for such discussions, they would only fret you.”

“ Grandpapa, I am surely old enough to be your confidante, if not wise enough to be your counsellor ; if we are to meet with reverses, it is only in union we can find strength to bear them. Oh, dear grandpapa, come what may, let us avoid the pangs of concealment ; let me read that letter.”

With a mute expression of surprise, at the tone she had assumed, he handed her the letter, which but for Winter’s communications the day before, would have enlightened her but

little ; as it was, she felt a curious sensation of relief, that the dreaded moment was no longer to be anticipated, and that from the present hour a mutual confidence would be established between her and her grandfather.

“ We must leave this house of course,” she said, musingly, as she returned the letter. “ Shall we receive any more money from Ireland ?”

“ Not a shilling ! Resistance is, I fear, useless, except for my character’s sake ; my child, my bright Kate, what will become of you ? I can do nothing.”

Never before had she seen the old man’s firmness shaken. The low moan, with which he turned away, covering his face with both his hands, as if oppressed with the sense of his own helplessness, struck terror into her heart, while it seemed to arm her with indomitable resolution to uphold and cherish her beloved parent, round whose declining years such heavy shadows were gathering. Steadying her voice

by an immense effort, and striving to still the throbbing pulses that shook her frame, she raised and tenderly kissed the hand that hung, in nerveless despondency, over the back of a chair near which the Colonel stood.

“ My own dear grandpapa, I know how sad all this is, but for my sake do not be so cast down, do not give way to despair. You have been my guide, my model all my life ! show me how to bear misfortune now !”

She paused to regain command over her traitor voice, that would tremble.

“ But, Kate, we are beggars ; in another month I shall not know where to find the price of our daily food ; and though Georgina Desmond is wealthy and generous, dependency is wretchedness.”

“ Right, dear grandpapa,” she replied, almost gladly, at this opening to the proposition she feared to make, “ and we will scorn it. See, I can play well, and I love to teach, oh, very much ; you will let me try and be so

happy as to earn a little for you—I should be so proud ! Not here, but in London, and then we shall be always together, and so happy ! and independent, and—”

“ You teach ! never,” cried the old man, turning from her, excitedly. “ You were born for a different fate. Would to God you had married that wealthy Englishman, as Georgy wished, but—”

“ No, no,” interrupted Kate, “ is poverty, is earning one’s own bread so miserable a lot, that one should prefer the unutterable wretchedness of a marriage without affection ? But why, dearest and best, am I not to teach ? how many, born to as good a position as mine, have done so, and, if I do not, what is to become of us ?”

“ What indeed !” groaned Vernon.

There was a mournful pause. Kate, not daring to break the thread of her grandfather’s thoughts, and silently pressing her smooth, soft cheek against his wrinkled hand.

“ My own consoling angel !” said he at last. “ It is a sad lot for you, at your age, to sink at once into oblivion, and—”

“ How do you know that I am to sink into oblivion ? how can you tell to what brilliant destiny this dark passage may be but an entrance ? Dear grandpapa, ‘ Time and the hours run through the darkest day,’ let us bear the present expecting a brighter future, and now, shall I send for Mr. Winter ?”

“ Yes,” with a deep sigh, “ we cannot act too quickly.”

Trembling in every nerve, yet not without a feeling of relief, that the dreaded explanation was over. Kate penned a hasty note to Mr. Winter, which he quickly responded to in person.

The long conference that followed placed Winter, ‘ *au fond*,’ of the position of his friend.

The farms of Knockdrum, worth little over two hundred pounds per annum, were all that

was left to the Colonel, of the wreck of his property, and this poor remainder was barely sufficient to meet the claim of Mr. Taaffe.

We will not follow the long, desultory conversation that ensued ; nor record the energy with which Winter poured forth proverbs, Spanish, French, and Italian, to prove the Satanic origin of law ; nor the sweet endurance with which Kate endeavoured to accustom her grandfather's mind to her project of her teaching.

It was decided that the Priory house and its furniture should be disposed of at once, and that the Colonel and Kate should take up their abode at Winter's, till matters could be a little more arranged, and an answer received from Lady Desmond to Kate's last letter, which informed her of the delay occasioned by Taaffe's proceedings.

“ Remember, Colonel, though I think it too soon to consider Miss Vernon's proposition, when the time comes I shall be on her side.

Kate, we must have a talk about it—and pray dine with us ; when thinking is of no use it is better to have a rubber ; do not be too much cast down ; this '*diluvio*' has shown you the crown jewel you have still left ; it is only the diamond that sparkles in the dark. And now, come and see poor Gilpin with me. You may as well, when you have answered that confounded letter. Here's your desk." Aside to Kate, as the old man settled himself to write. " We must not leave him too much by himself."

Light and pleasant is the task to paint the the various phases of joy, for whatever light touches it beautifies ; but rare is the skill that can truly depict the gloom of sorrow, and fascinate the eye, by a depth of shadow that admits of little variation ! For those who are gliding along on the smooth waters of prosperity, turn from a picture with which they cannot sympathise, and whose most exquisite touches, uninstructed by care or adversity, they

pronounce overdrawn; and even the treaders of rough paths, wearied with 'the burden and heat of the day,' give but a reluctant glance, at what only reminds them of their own griefs, and exclaim; "this we know, this we have felt, tell us of joy, of hope, of true friends, and tender hearts; cheat us into a happy dream, even though it lull us but for a moment, even though the waking be bitter, and our souls will bless you."

CHAPTER III.

PREPARATIONS.

THE day but one after the above conversation, another summons brought Winter to the little dining-room of the Priory, the scene of so many consultations.

The Colonel welcomed him with his usual *empressement*, but a tremour of the hands, as he waved towards a seat, with an old-fashioned and urbane grace, which scarcely the shock of an earthquake could have made him forget, indicated some excitement; Kate's color too was heightened, and her eyes, though bright, had an anxious expression.

“ You see we cannot get on without you, my dear sir,” began the Colonel, “ your prompt compliance with my request for an interview, is most gratifying—ah! The subject I wish to speak to you on is far from unpleasant, I want your opinion on a rather momentous question. In short, show Mr. Winter that letter, Kate.”

“ Ha, hum! Lady Desmond, I see. What a firm hand the woman writes.”

It was hurriedly written, and short; after a few desultory remarks, apparently in reply to Kate’s last letter, it concluded thus, “ Of law and its probable delays, I can form no judgment, but why they should prevent your visit to me I cannot and will not understand; they are additional reasons, I think, why you should at once take up your abode with me, at least until affairs are arranged, and that low-bred knave’s vile scheme is defeated; I know not, dearest Kate, how far these proceedings may affect the great tidal wave, which ebbs

and flows in men's pockets. Therefore, whatever you may decide upon, and whenever you require it, I trust your dear grandfather will not refuse, to fill up the enclosed check on my banker for whatever sum he may want ; it will be a gratification to his old *protegé* to think she can be of use to him, and if you will use it to facilitate your journey here, you will leave scarce a wish unfulfilled to yours, as ever.—G. D.”

“ Ha ! done like a princess ! a generous, headstrong woman, I'll lay my life ; and now a journey or not a journey, that's the question ; let me hear your opinion, Kate ?”

“ Oh ! Mr. Winter, I have none ; my only clear idea is, that this world is not such a bad, unhappy world, where we have a Lady Desmond and a Mr. Winter to leaven the whole lump. It is a most tempting offer ; but you will call me perverse ; I do not feel half so inclined to accept it as when—as when we were more independent of it.”

“ And you, Colonel Vernon ?”

“ I am very anxious,” said the Colonel, in a hesitating manner, not usual with him, “ at all events, that Kate should avail herself of such an invitation. Nurse might travel with her, I shall probably visit Dublin, look in upon you, and—”

“ Pray where is the money to come from to do all this ?” said Winter, bluntly.

“ My dear sir, you forget we shall sell our furniture, and let this house.”

“ And when that is all gone you will be just where you were, except that your chief comforter will be many a league away, and Lady Desmond’s gratitude immersed in that lethe in which impulsive people’s noblest sentiments most frequently lose themselves.”

“ You wrong my cousin,” cried Miss Vernon.

“ In truth I feel incapable of deciding,” said the Colonel. “ I do not like the idea of throwing ourselves on Lady Desmond ; but, Winter,

you cannot comprehend the horror with which I contemplate my Kate's teaching—walking out alone, meeting insolence—Great God !”

He covered his face with his hands, and Kate, half appalled by the dismal picture he had drawn, clasped hers together with an appealing look to Winter, who said, huskily and oracularly,

“ Hear me, Colonel. I can easily comprehend your feelings, though I am a plebeian ; but I tell you there is another side of the picture. At present you are in perfect sympathy with your cousin, and the electricity of mutual obligation and kindness runs freely back and forward between you ; but when you have been for six months her inmate, feeling yourself dependent on her bounty for the bread you eat ; when a wish for variety may tempt her to covet the rooms you occupy for some more amusing guest, less weighed down by care ; and when the freshness and excitement of a generous act, shall have ceased to interest ; a

thousand mortifying slights, a thousand unimportant trifles, will make your life wretched, and wear away the links that now seem to bind you so close together."

"Oh, no, no, Georgy could never act unkindly," cried Kate.

"My dear young lady," resumed Winter, "there are few in this curious world of ours that cannot, once or twice in their lives, do a kind and a generous action; but there is not one in a thousand, or a hundred thousand, that can act with uniform kindness, courtesy and justice to a dependent, a creature in their power—power! it is the forcing house of evil! The woman who could quarrel with you because you would not be happy her way, is not one of these exceptions; she would wound you one day, and beg your forgiveness, in abject terms, the next; and you, doubly sensitive from feeling the impossibility of freedom, would live in a state of slavery! Pah! never shut yourselves out from the chance of earning in-

dependence here, for such a prospect, however *pliant*, the aspect at present."

"Ha!" said Colonel Vernon, walking up and down. "There is a great deal of truth in what you say, but Lady Desmond is a woman of warm and generous feeling, and Kate, at least, would be safe with her, so—"

"You know, grandpapa, I will never leave you—it is useless and cruel to talk about it!"

"It is both, my dear Colonel," urged Winter, "Kate would be wretched without you; nor do I think this a fitting time for you to separate; and, be warned by me, live on a crust and cold water, if you can earn no more, rather than doom yourselves to a life of dependence."

"Dear Mr. Winter, you are right," said Kate, earnestly, "my own grandpapa, let us make up our minds, to bear all hardships, provided we are together. If I must teach, do not make my path more difficult by taking it so much to heart. We have long lived inde-

pendent of any pleasures but those of our home ; these we can still have ; the worst pang will be to bid this kind friend farewell ; but he will come and see us sometimes. And after all we may win the lawsuit and enjoy our little fortune doubly. I will write to dear Georgy, and affectionately decline her kind offer ; and then let us set to work at once about what must be done—shall we, dearest and best ?” kissing his hand.

“ It must be so,” said the Colonel, after a pause. “ It must be so, and I will never fret you more, my love, by opposition to your wishes ; I thought it right, at all events, to consider the advantages Lady Desmond’s invitation might offer for you, though I shrink from the idea of living on any one—and to think of parting with you ! ah !”

“ Now you talk like a man of sense,” said Winter. “ I will tell you, what I think you ought to write ; I think Lady Desmond will be affronted if you reject all her offers, and

justly ; so split the difference, keep that blank check, (she has sent it unconditionally) against a rainy day ; tell her, "though you have no want of it, at present, you may, and do not mention your intention of teaching ; she would be hurt at your preferring such an alternative to residing with her ; next year she may return, and find you happy, comfortable and independent ; I trust things will wear a very different aspect from that presented by the bare announcement, 'I am going to teach.' Hum," he added, musingly. " Langley used to keep up a good connection in the musical world, and Herman, he bears an excellent character, and holds a good place ; you must look up your old music-master, my dear. Then, Colonel, I have known so many people ruined before they could make the necessary changes ; they get into a procrastinating habit, waiting for this to be sold, and that to be paid, before the totally new system of life can be commenced,

which is so essential. Now I'll tell you what I'll do. Leave the Priory and its furniture in my hands ; I'll get a tenant for it, or make the fat Rector take it off your hands. The furniture shall be disposed of by auction, and I'll advance you a hundred pounds upon it ; if it sells for more, I'll remit you the difference, if for less, you can pay me when you have pitched Taaffe to the '*Inferno* ;' but I am quite certain it will bring more. Then you can start when you please, quietly ; and when you begin to like London, direct me to sell your belongings. Hey ! anything to stop the infernal chatter of Miss Araminta Cox—the Mrs. Grundy of A——. What say you, Colonel ?"

" That you are a friend indeed ! I will be entirely guided by your counsels ; but remember, you must not wrong yourself. I must have all the auctioneer's accounts forwarded to me. I can hardly describe to you the relief your thus smoothing matters affords me."

“ You give me strength and courage,” said Kate.

“ Hum,” resumed Winter. “ Langley—yes, he can engage lodgings for you where you are going. When do you think you can start ?”

“ Oh !” said Kate, shrinkingly, “ not sooner than a fortnight or three weeks.”

“ A fortnight or three weeks,” cried the Colonel, “ impossible !”

“ You are a real, earnest worker, Miss Vernon,” interposed Winter. “ I expected a much longer date ; what will become of me when you are gone ? and gone on such an errand. *‘ Dio buono ! le sciagure e le allegrezza non vengono mai sole ;’* but what do you think of doing with Mrs. O’Toole ?”

“ Oh, she goes with us, of course,” replied Kate.

“ Well, you know best how much you pay her, and whether you can afford it ?” returned Winter.

“But nurse is not like a servant, she is a friend, she could never live with any people but us? Oh, do not tell me, we must leave nurse!” said Miss Vernon.

“We cannot accept her services for nothing,” observed the Colonel.

“I will gladly engage her as cook and house-keeper, at whatever wages you give her.”

“Her wages are small,” said Kate, “she would not accept higher, since we left Dungar!”

“Well, you must settle all that with her,” returned Winter. “I am ready to ratify any arrangement you may make; and now write to Lady Desmond, as I suggested, Kate; *ma belle et bonne enfant*, you are wearied by this long, gloomy talk, and I am an old bear. I know it, Colonel; but my heart is like the coat of my prototype, rough and warm.”

After some more general conversation, they separated, Winter and the Colonel, to visit

some land the former wished to purchase, and about which he affected great anxiety to have the Colonel's opinion. Kate to walk in solitary meditation by the river, to try and collect her thoughts, before the dreaded explanation with nurse. Mournfully she gazed at all the well-known objects she had learned to love, in her tranquil, happy retirement ; and her bright, quick, fancy painted in strong contrast the life she was henceforth to lead.

“Even if I am successful, grandpapa will be so much alone,” she thought ; “and what a crowded, busy, terrifying place London is ! I am glad Fred Egerton is in India, I could not bear that he should meet me, perhaps, walking alone in London.”

And the large tears stole down her cheeks, at the mixture of feelings this vision aroused. Turning slowly round, she approached the little landing place, intending to speak a few words to Elijah Bush ; a little, rosy, curly-

headed boy, was seated in the boat instead of its shaggy owner; he rose, as Kate stopped at the end of the landing.

“Where is Elijah?” she enquired.

“Please, ma’am, he’s been sick these three days back.”

“I am sorry to hear it; what is the matter with him?”

“Oh, ma’am, he’s got the rheumatics drefful bad.”

“And is there no one to mind the boat but you, my little man?”

“No, ma’am.”

“You cannot row it?”

“No, ma’am; but whiles the men rows the’selves, and gives me the money.”

“And have you had many passengers?”

“One yesterday, ma’am; and none at all the day.”

“Then poor Elijah must be but badly off; has he any money?”

“Oh dear no, ma’am.”

“Where does he live?”

“In the Piper’s lane, nigh St. Winefred’s Tower, ma’am.”

“Will you show me the way to him?”

“Oh yes, ma’am; I often hear him speak of ye, ma’am; he’ll be main glad to see ye, ma’am.”

“What is your name, my little man?”

“Willy Bush, ma’am.”

“Are you Elijah’s grandson?”

“No, ma’am, he’s my gran-uncle.”

“Well, I will just go up to the Priory, and return to you immediately; and then you shall show me the way to him.”

Called away from the contemplation of her own trials, Kate, feeling her usual elasticity return, ran lightly up the steep path, and called nurse, to arm herself with broth and flannel for the invalid.

“Is it Piper’s lane? Now, Miss Kate, I cannot let you go to sich a place. Set up the old Methody, to have Miss Vernon nurse and

tending iv him—I can take the tay and the broth, and them flannels just as well.”

“But, nurse, he would like to see me.”

“I’ll go bail he would.”

“And I would like to see him; besides, I want to talk to you, dear nurse.”

“Faix, it’s a wax modial I am in yer hands, ye turn an’ twist me what way ye will; but to think iv yer takin’ the illigant mutton broth I was cooking for the masther’s own self, bangs Banaher.”

“There will be quite enough left for us,” laughed Kate; “and I am afraid the poor man wants it much more than we do.”

“It’s not the likes iv me ’ud begrudge him a taste iv broth,” said nurse, tying a capacious tin-can up very carefully. “Now are yes ready, avourneen. It’s yerself has the heart for the poor! an’ the Lord ’ill remember it to you in the hour of need, amin.”

The little boy guided them through many narrow, winding ways, to a wretched habita-

tion outside the walls, and almost under the half-ruined tower of St. Winefred. It was a miraculous place, for although all the pools seemed to be, at least partly, composed of soap suds, nothing looked as if it had ever been washed.

Here, in a tolerably clean room, at least by comparison, they found Elijah, looking more shaggy than ever, stretched on some straw, and covered with a tattered pea-jacket. After a little kindly talk and friendly enquiries as to the old man's resources, which proved to be indeed scanty, Kate left him, telling the small boy to call at the Priory, in half an hour, when she said she would give him a note to the doctor.

“ So good bye, Elijah, I hope you will be better to-morrow ; in the mean time take this, till you are able to earn some more yourself.”

“ I'm a peor hand at returning thanks, Miss Vernon,” said Elijah, with evident feeling, “ but,” he added, solemnly. “ The Lord hear

thee in the day of trouble, the name of the God of Jacob defend thee!"

"Amen," said Kate, fervently, bending her head to the benediction.

Mrs. O'Toole, pausing in her occupation of transferring the broth to an earthen vessel, crossed herself, and the next moment they left the place silently.

"He's a mighty quare man," said Mrs. O'Toole, meditatively, after they had almost reached the river side, without breaking a pause of unusual duration. "Faith, he blessed ye like a clargy."

"And well he might, he little knows how soon his kindly wishes may be required."

"Why, avourneen?"

"Nurse," said Kate, after a minute of troubled thought, "we 'ust leave this place."

"Is it to go sthreelin' over thim furrin' parts, among dirt and flays, an' the Lord knows what?"

"No, nurse, nothing half so agreeable."

“ Ah ! thin, what is it, agrah ? spake out to your poor ould nurse.”

“ Ah, dear nurse, there are sad times coming ; poor, dear grandpapa, through some terrible law business, has no money left, none at all !”

“ Miss Kate, is it the truth yer afther tellin’ me ?”

“ Too, too true ! I cannot explain, indeed I cannot understand, but there is a Mr. Taaffe, who says grandpapa owes him a great deal of money, which was really paid long ago ; but which, as we have lost some papers, we cannot prove, and he has got Knockdrum, and we—we have nothing !”

“ Oh, blessed queen of heaven ! that iver I should live to see the day ; not even the next gale ?”

Kate shook her head, and Mrs. O’Toole, placing the can beside her, sat down on a log of timber by the river, as if unable to support herself under such intelligence.

“ An’ you so tinderly rared, an’ the masther! Ah! sweet Mary, what’ll become iv us at all, at all? Taaffe, sure I remimber him, the desavin’ vagabone, ye wor Arthur Taaffe, wid a hard word for the poor, an’ yer cap in yer hand to the quolity ye wor ruinatin’; faith, it’s a miserable pity the masther let it go so asy ; sure the wind iv a word to my sisther’s husband’s son, Denny Doolan ’ud have riz the boys on Knockdrum ; an’ I’d like to see the process sarver that ’ud get the tip of his toe on the lands.”

“ You know, nurse, that is a sort of thing happily gone by.”

“ More’s the pity if it is ; how are yez to deal with thaves an’ ruffins, if it is’nt with the sthrong hand ?”

There was a pause, during which, nurs’, her hands clasped and embracing her knees, rocked herself to and fro, and Kate, leaning against an old thorn, (now bursting into pri-

meval youth and beauty,) gazed sadly down upon her.

“ Six an’ four is ten, an’ four is fourteen,” now burst out Mrs. O’Toole, abruptly. “ Ye see, Miss Kate, me daughther is doin’ well in Ameriky, wid her husband ; an’ Denis in the hoighth iv grandure wid the Captin in Ingee, an’ I, aitin’ an’ dhrinkin’ iv the best iv vittles, an’ doin’ just what I like in the Curnel’s house, wid shawls, an’ gowns, an’ lace caps, guve me by the thrunkful ; faith, me wages is just so much dhross ; I’d as lieve light the candles with the notes ; so, Miss Kate, avick ! if the Masther ud keep the money for me till betther times, I’d be greatly behoulden to him, he’d save me from bein’ chated ; any ways it’s a murtherin’ shame to have it lyin’ there useless.”

“ Nurse, my own, dear nurse,” said Kate, clasping her arms round her, “ where is there so true a heart as yours ? No, no, this will not

do." Then, (as nurse reddened a little,) should we want it you shall be the first I apply to ; but we shall have a hundred pounds to go on with ; and Lady Desmond has offered us all we want ; and besides, (approaching the last dreaded communication, with a desperate attempt at gaiety) besides, I am going to earn quite a fortune."

" Airn a fortune, Miss Kate ! ah, how, jewel ?"

" I am, you know, a good musician, and in London there is money to be got for teaching music, and—"

" Miss Vernon, is it a tacher ye'd be asther makin' iv yerself ? You that was born iv as ould a stock as any in all Ireland, ay oulder. Och ! what's come to ye at all, at all, you that used to be like a princess wid yer aquals, an' a angel wid yer infariors ? I niver thought I'd live to see the day I could say, I'm ashamed iv ye ! ochone ! ochone !"

" Nor will you, if you will think for a

moment," said Kate, affectionately taking Mrs. O'Toole's hand between both her own. " Listen to me: suppose I had been born your own daughter, instead of your having adopted me, would you think me mean if I worked for the support of my grandfather, or, would you approve of my leaving him and myself to live on what we could get from the charity of others? No, I thought not. Will the good and gracious God regard me with less favour, for endeavouring to submit and bow before the sentence He has, in His wisdom, pronounced on our first parents? ' In the sweat of thy brow shall thou eat thy bread.' "

" No, ochone no, alanah!" sobbed nurse " sure I'm the unfortunate ould woman to live to this day—to see mee beautiful child, that shu'd have married to a prence, tachin' thim thaves iv English the piania—an the masther! what 'ill become iv him? The Lord look down on him! Sweet Jesus pity us!"

" Now, nurse," resumed Kate, tremulously,

“I know how you could do me a service—I will tell you, how you may be my support ; I shall have enough to do with grandpapa—help me to cheer him—make light of our troubles to him ; and—” clasping her hand, “Oh, dear! old friend, do not scare away the courage so necessary to me—by these sad lamentations. There is one thing more I must say to you; we have no right to induce you to come along with us in ignorance, and, God knows, if we shall be able to pay you, even the small wages you so generously insisted on, when we left Dungar. Mr. Winter offers you higher terms, and a comfortable home, and—”

“Och ! what have I done, that ye should think I’m not desarvin’ iv being wid yez, in throuble ? Is id at this time of day ye want to be tould that I’d lave thousands to beg through the world wid yez—lave ye ! och, where would I go ? Sure yez the whole world to ould nurse ! Lave ye, an ye in throuble. Oh ! what have I done that ye

would spake that way to me?" And covering her face in the folds of her cloak—poor nurse sobbed aloud!

"Hear me, my own dear, earliest friend," cried Kate, kneeling beside her, and endeavouring to take her hand, "I have said this, simply, because I was told to do so—I never dreamt—I never *could* dream of parting from you, and that subject is at rest between us for ever—come what may, we will be together. Do you hear me? Put your arms round me, and say you forgive your own Kate."

And nurse folded her to her heart fervently, exclaiming—

"The blessin' iv Christ on ye, avourneen!"

There was a pause for some moments—broken at length by the sound of footsteps, seldom heard in that unfrequented spot.

"We must go home now," said Kate, wiping away her tears. Nurse, still silent, rose, and lifted her can.

"An where is it yer going to tache? that

iver I should say the word!" she asked with a fresh burst of grief. "In London—in London, musha, but it's a big place, and sure the house o' Lords is there, an I'll go bail the masther—'ill meet many a one that heard tell iv D'Arcy Vernon in Dungar—who knows Miss Kate; but some iv thim 'ill spake to the Queen, to make him a jidge or a gineral, or the like, any ways; it's sich a tunderin' big place, that ye might be tachin' in one corner, and livin' like a prencess in another, an no one a bit the wiser; sure, yer right hand wouldn't know what the lift was doin', in a big place like that."

"Very true, nurse, I dare say no one will know what I am about."

"The Lord send!" said Mrs. O'Toole, heartily, as the fact of Kate's teaching for money began to lose half its horrors in the fancied possibility of concealing the inglorious occupation.

"Now, nurse," said Kate, pausing at the

gate of their little domain, “remember our agreement, you must not make bad worse to grandpapa.”

“Niver you fear, darlint, I’d bite the tongue out iv me head, afore I’d spake the word, that id vex yer; only dont send me from ye, mavourneen.”

True to her word, when the Colonel, after dinner—in consequence of Kate’s having intimated that nurse knew how affairs stood—said—

“Bad times, Nelly—bad times—worse than I ever thought I should live to see.”

She replied cheerfully, and steadily—

“Thru, for ye, sir; but there’s good luck afore yez, for all that—an’ Miss Kate an meself’s goin’ to be as bould as lions, so we are faith, I’ll see yez give the go-bye to thim thavin’ attornies, yet.”

Swiftly sped the interval that remained before they left their peaceful dwelling; numerous were the arrangements to be made before

the final move, and the selections of those peculiarly sacred treasures, that could not be left behind, the number of which was daily swelled. Winter took charge of the Colonel's picture, but, "John Anderson," was packed for removal—music and drawings—a pet vase or two—her books, and some cushions for the Colonel, was all that Kate could take with her of her pleasant, pretty home; but the sofa and *prie dieu*, at which she had so diligently worked, to give an air of greater elegance to their little drawing-room—the arm chair, so associated in her mind's eye with the noble, venerable form of her grandfather—the flower garden, now bursting into radiant beauty, and which Fred Egerton used so much to admire, even in its autumn garb—all these must pass away into strange hands; she must not only leave her ark, but ever think of it as desecrated! And, Elijah Bush, too, he must be left; and the navigator's little orphan; and the keeper's sickly boy—all her poor people—the

various objects to which her full, rich sympathies so freely flowed.

Yes; many a link that bound her, closely and pleasantly, to her calm and quiet life, in their ecclesiastical retreat, she was compelled to break; and still through all the saddening occupations which preceded their dreaded journey, Kate endeavoured to keep her mind fixed upon the future she had laid down for herself, with a steadiness which, exhibited in some more high sounding and attractive cause than the mere common-place duty of earning bread for her parent, would have drawn forth odes and laudations from many a potent pen.

Nurse's conduct was beyond all praise; not even when alone with Kate, did she indulge in anything beyond a passing condemnation of attorneys, generally; and good little Mrs. Winter, only half enlightened as to the real motives of her friends' departure, was invulnerable to the prying of Miss Araminta Cox.

Matters stood thus and time had run by, to within a week of the removal to London, when Gilpin, now very weak, interrupted Kate's practice one morning.

"My dear Mr. Gilpin," said she, rising to receive him, with some surprise, "this is most imprudent!"

"I could not let you go without paying one more visit to the Priory." His cough interrupted him.

"But we should have called on you, I intended doing so with grandpapa; indeed you were wrong to venture out, but, as you are here, how glad I am to see you, and the day is so fine."

"When do you start?" he asked, feebly; sinking back exhausted into an arm chair Kate had drawn forward.

"Ah, do not talk of that; Tuesday or Wednesday. Now the time draws near I feel my heart sink at the idea of leaving all we are accustomed to, to cast ourselves like ship-

wrecked mariners on the great troubled ocean of London.”

“ And I have almost prayed that you might remain a little longer ; but it is not to be so. I have crawled out to-day, my dear Miss Vernon, for I knew I should find you alone, and I wanted to speak a few quiet words with you. I almost feared to meet you after this sad change in all our hopes for you ; I have so deplored it, that, judging by myself, I dreaded its effects on you, but your face re-assures me, there is no grief, scarce a grave look there. I have so much wished to speak with you.”

“ And I with you, dear Mr. Gilpin, I feel it is so long since I saw you.”

“ But let us speak at once of all that has occurred, I shall soon be so weary. How is it that there is none of the languor of sorrow, the fever of anxiety in your face ?”

“ Because I feel neither—do you know, I am half surprised to find how the first feeling of dread at the idea of earning money, has

worn away by steadfastly looking at it. It reminds me of those double pictures which appear wintry when you first look at them, but, hold them to the light, and the deeper, richer colors of summer, painted beneath, shine forth ! Then, dear grandpapa has borne up so wonderfully, and poor nurse has been so manageable, and you and Mr. Winter so—so kind, that I should be an ungrateful coward to let myself feel sad, except," she added, as the tears sprang to her eyes, "at the thought of parting from you all."

Gilpin was silent, for a few moments, and then said,

" My dear young lady, forgive me, for not knowing your noble nature better ! I ought to have been certain you would be above the common grief that mourns the possibility of losing caste, as the worst of earthly woes ; my chief anxiety to see you, and to see you alone, was to hear fully, from your own lips, all the plans of which I do not like to question the

Colonel too closely, and to offer you a few hints, which, (excuse me if I presume too far) may be useful to you."

" Our plans are simple enough. To remove to London, where, through the interest of my old music master and one or two friends, to whom Mr. Winter offers me introductions, I hope to obtain pupils in music, who will pay me for instruction, that is all."

" If you will allow me I will add one, to an old master of mine. And these are all the introductions you will take with you?"

" Yes, all, Mr. Winter mentioned the bishop's wife as likely to be of use; but, to say the truth, I shrunk from the idea of asking her; I do not like to have the matter talked over at the little clerical tea-parties of A—. So much for my high-mindedness."

" Very natural, and a few good professional introductions are worth scores of mere recommendations to fashionable ladies, who consider they fulfil their promise if they mention your

name to any acquaintance who may happen to make enquiries for an instructress. Now if Herman, (I think he was your master,) will really back you up, and give you his junior pupils, you may be very successful. I am afraid my recommendation will not prove very effectual, but try it."

"And, Mr. Gilpin, what should you—that is have you any idea what I ought to ask for my services?"

"You must learn all that from Herman, or Winter's friends; as to the terms on which you and your pupils' families will meet, accept some hints, which experience enables me to give; God knows you will teach under very different circumstances from what I did. Novels and magazines teem with the most revolting instances of the slights shown to lady teachers. In my opinion all this may be very much, if not altogether avoided, except by the resident governess; occasional teachers have only to observe this rule; treat those with whom you

come in contact, professionally, as men of business do those whom they encounter on 'Change, or in their offices; once a lesson is given, the relations between pupil and teacher are at an end, and you have no more to say to each other; for this purpose resist any advance towards intimacy, which may—which will be sure to be made to you. Am I speaking too freely, Miss Vernon, in thus placing the reality of your future before you?"

"No," said Kate, firmly, and holding out her hand to him. "No, I feel the need of such suggestions, and I like to talk of what must be; it is good for me, and there is no use in making grandpapa think of it at all more than necessary; I hope to manage so as often to cheat him into forgetfulness of my occupation; only I do trust Mr. Winter's friend may not engage apartments for us in a wretched, narrow street. Lady Desmond used to live in Berkeley street, and it was reckoned a good situation, I thought it horrible."

“ You might try the Kensington or Bayswater side.”

“ Any trees or flowers to be seen there ?”

“ Oh, yes, plenty.”

“ Then I will beg of Mr. Winter to suggest that locale.”

“ Mrs. O’Toole of course goes with you ?”

“ Of course. Dear nurse, she is so true and self-forgetful !”

“ And Cormac, what will you do with him ? You can hardly take that huge animal with you.”

“ Not just yet ; he remains with the Winters ; but will follow us when we can arrange to have him. Mr. Winter said no one would take us in, at first, with so formidable a looking companion.”

“ I should fear not, but—”

The entrance of the Colonel here cut short their private conference ; he, like his granddaughter, expressed surprise and pleasure, not unmixed with uneasiness, at the organist’s

appearance, and, after some discussion, he agreed to dine with them, at a somewhat earlier hour than usual; as the softness of a June evening could not possibly, they all agreed, be more injurious than the morning air.

“And let us send for Winter and his wife,” concluded the Colonel.

Once more the little circle met round the hospitable board in the Priory dining-room, and though the absence of many familiar ornaments, already packed, gave a look of bareness to the pretty sitting room, and bespoke the approaching departure, the party was not a sad one; each tried to cheer the others, and in so doing roused himself.

So ended the last dinner at the Priory, and never again did the same party meet under the same roof.

Some such presentiment touched Kate's heart, and gave a tenderness to her attentions, an under current of feeling even to the fanciful

sallies and playful arguments with which she strove to enliven her guests, which, gracefully as she ever played the part of hostess, lent an inexpressible charm to all she uttered ; and even Mrs. Winter, usually unobservant, seemed impressed by the peculiar sweetness of her voice and manner ; and often, in after life, did Kate look back to that last evening as singularly agreeable, despite the approaching separation.

The last ! Oh, how much of tenderness clings round that word—the last word or look, the last even of suffering, what a grasp, they take of the memory ; as though the soul, in itself immortal, cannot familiarise its faculties with any thing so finite, so sad, so passing as the last.

CHAPTER IV.

A NEW WORLD.

HOWEVER kind and true by nature, a man who has risen to, can never quite understand the feeling, of one who has fallen from higher fortunes; the seeming trifles which can elate, or depress, are but trifles to the former; nor can any amount of sincere friendship ever reveal to him the saddening effect which some insignificant occurrence, he would scarcely perceive, produces on the other; he cannot dream with what terrible and intense conviction, the sudden consciousness of total change, flashes on the mind that had happily half-forgotten it, at

some accident of daily life, to him, nothing, in itself, a mere "*contretemps*," which, in brighter days would have only raised a smile, but which is now too sure an indication of the current ; straw though it be.

And Winter, with all his real, steady affection, for Kate, felt half angry with her for the obstinacy with which she adhered to her intention of travelling by the first class in the railway. He could not comprehend, what she could so well feel, that the moral effect produced on her grandfather, by a long journey in a conveyance, which would, every moment, bring the utter change of his fortunes and position, so forcibly before him, would far more than counterbalance the few pounds saved.

" But," reiterated Winter, " the colonel is well and remarkably strong for his age, he would not find the journey in the least fatiguing by the second class ; and, my dear girl, I want to impress on you the necessity of conforming,

at once, to the changes Heaven has been pleased to send you. Procrastination is always bad, but in the present case peculiarly injurious."

"Yes, Mr. Winter, I know all that, and as to the fatigue, that is not what I think of; but imagine how wretched grandfather would feel—no, you cannot imagine—but would it be worth while, for the sake of the difference, to let him receive so bad an impression of his new position at the very outset, and so rudely. He will have enough to suffer. Let him have an easy start; in short this is one of the very few points on which I cannot accept of your guidance; and all I will add is, I hope you will, though unconvinceed, acquiesce in my decision, and not mention this controversy to grandpapa."

"'Pon my word, Miss Vernon, you put me down, right royally," said he, laughing, and yet surprised at the air of quiet firmness with which she announced her determination.

“ My own, dear, kind master ! Ah, when shall I have an argument with you again ? But you will write to me often, and sometimes come to London.”

“ I will, I will indeed. Ah, Kate, I did not know how much you had twined yourself round this tough old heart of mine, till I found I was to lose my bright pupil. You had better make over Cormac to me, till you have a house of your own ?”

“ Oh, no, no, we should be incomplete without my dear old dog ! Besides, I promised him he should join us as soon as possible.”

“ Promised the dog ; and you look as grave as a judge.”

“ Yes, I said to him yesterday, ‘ I am not going to leave you long behind, dear Cormac,’ and he looked up at me with his honest eyes, as though he trusted me so implicitly ; I could not deceive him.”

“ Kate, you have too much imagination for

the battle of life, get rid of some of it, I advise you."

"Get rid of it ! And shall I pursue my way more successfully, if I clip the wings that might sometimes help to waft me over rough places."

"You are incorrigible ! You see your fancy is going to cheat you out of nearly five pounds in this railroad business. I wish you would be advised by me ; and, indeed, strictly speaking, it is your duty to conform as soon as possible to circumstances."

"My strict duty ! Oh, Mr. Winter, I abjure strictness, it is a thing of mathematical precision, gone, vanished with the old dispensation ; which, providing rules for all and every thing, left no room for those exquisite shades and tints without which, life, as well as pictures, would have neither truth nor beauty. I never like to think how much or how little I ought to do ; there is one maxim on this

point, that supplies to me the absence of every other. ‘Freely ye have received, freely give,’ Why should I pain another, to fulfil to the letter, an unimportant duty? But, I have settled that point.”

“Well, well, you are right in intention at all events, and now I must say good morning, what are you going to do?”

“Why, I have finished my preparations; and as grandpapa is going with you about the luggage, I intend hearing the evening service in the Cathedral; vespers, (I like the name, popish though it be) for the last time. Ah, *Maestro mio*, to-morrow.”

“Don’t talk of it, but I’ll tell Mrs. Winter she may expect you in an hour. *Au revoir.*”

Kate strolled slowly through the church-yard, and mounted the steps; stood for some minutes gazing at the well-known scene from the city wall, thinking, “how and when shall I see it again! What awaits me in the new world into which I am about to plunge!”

Then turning to the right, she followed the rather tortuous way, formed by the time worn ramparts, until she reached the narrow alley which led to the cathedral. The entrance to the cloisters at this spot, was a low vaulted passage, which communicated, in ancient times, with the servants' offices, and formed an angle with a lofty chapel, now used as an ante-room ; and here Kate again paused, as if to take the scene into her memory. To the Chapter house, opposite the end opening on the cloisters, was a beautiful window, showing through its lace-like and still perfect tracery, the soft, green grass which clothed the quadrangle formed by the cloisters, and a thorn tree grew close against its mullions, and even thrust its branches, so delicately green, with the first fresh and unspeakable tints of spring, through their many openings ; contrasting its fair youth, with the solemn grey and massive stones around it. A bright gleam of sunshine, which fell slanting, it up one half the chapel, through which Kate advanced, leaving the other in shadow. The

unbroken stillness, the air of deep repose, which pervaded the old pile, gave something of its own calm to her feelings, which had been a little ruffled by the thousand anticipations her argument with Winter had called up. The hour of evening prayer was not yet arrived, and she stood for a while gazing at the exquisite effects of light and shade, till the perfect silence woke up her fancy, and she smiled to think, that it would scarce surprise her, to see a plumed and helmetted shadow fall on the stream of sunshine, which bathed the pavement with a flood of gold, and even were the shadow followed by a substantial mailed form, with knightly spurs, and cross-hilted sword, it would seem but natural, here.

The distant sound of the organ warned her that the service was about to begin, and she was soon kneeling in the quiet nook she usually occupied.

The next morning they left A——.

“The last journey I made by rail-road was with you to Carrington,” said Kate to Winter.

She was looking a little pale, and a certain anxious nervousness made her tremble in every limb ; but she kept up very cheerfully.

They were standing on the platform at the railway station, waiting for the train, which, starting from some newer and more important place, only gave a few hurried, breathless moments to poor old anti-locomotive A——.

The Colonel was looking a shade more elegant even than usual, in a large cloak, which hung gracefully round his tall, erect form. There was their luggage all ticketted and piled up, all of home that could be packed into trunks ; and Kate felt singularly desolate at the idea of being thus, for the first time, without any sanctuary, however humble, to which, as to an ark, she might retreat, when the fountains of the great deep, of sorrow or of disappointment, were broken up ; and Mrs.

Winter was there with a well-packed basket of sandwiches, and wine and water ; but poor Gilpin had been so unwell since his imprudent visit to the Priory, that he had been obliged to leave the Winters to do the parting honours, alone, to their valued friends. Nor can we omit to mention Mrs. O'Toole, who, in a black silk bonnet, snowy cap, and substantial cloth cloak, albeit it was early June, looked the very model of a respectable old family-servant ; over one arm hung Miss Vernon's shawl, and, in her left hand, she carried a blue band-box, containing divers and sundry articles thrust into it, at the last moment, and secured by a red silk handkerchief.

“ Yes,” returned Winter, in reply to Kate’s observation, “ we were a merry trio ; but we little anticipated the adventure you contrived to get up.”

“ It was all very curious,” said Kate, with a sigh, as her thoughts flew back to that pleasant evening, and its still pleasanter *dénouement*.

A shrill, piercing whistle! The porters stood, not to their arms, but to their trunks.

“Up-train coming,” said one of them, warningly, to our little party.

“Now then, don’t be in a hurry, Colonel—get the tickets all right,” said Winter; and the huge, hissing, relentless monster of an engine, rushed panting by the platform. “Do you get in and settle yourselves, Colonel; Mrs. O’Toole and I will see to the luggage.”

The Colonel obeyed; but Kate stood by the carriage door. Winter soon bustled back, and in more than usually husky tones, observed—

“All right—there goes the bell.”

“Dearest Mrs. Winter,” cried Kate, clasping that worthy little woman in her arms; “good bye;” and the tears she had long, with difficulty, restrained, poured down her cheeks; then turning to the kind, rough artist, she, somewhat to his surprise, bestowed an equally affectionate embrace on him, with such child-like simplicity and sincere feeling, that he was

inexpressibly touched. “ My kind love to Mr. Gilpin ; and, I need hardly say, take care of Cormac.”

“ God bless you, dear Kate,” from both the Winters, and she was hurried into the carriage, where nurse was already seated. A jerk back, and then forward, and they were swept away from the kind faces that looked so eagerly after them.

As long as the neighbouring scenery presented any familiar features, Kate looked mournfully and wistfully through the window ; but soon, too soon, they were flying beyond the limits of her longest walks ; and when the distant height, crowned by Mowbray Castle, longest visible, because the highest point in the surrounding country, disappeared, she dismissed her regrets, turned resolutely from the contemplation of past happiness, and determined to let no selfish grief, no personal consideration whatever intervene between her

heart and its great task. Comforting and supporting her grandfather.

“And you feel quite well, quite comfortable, dear grandfather.”

“Yes, love. Why, this is as good as any private carriage; you know I am quite a novice in rail-road travelling. How do you like it, Nelly?”

“Faith, an’ it’s an illigant coach intirely; but, Miss Kate, jewel, did iver ye see anything so fast as the hedges do be runnin’?”

“Yes,” laughed the Colonel, “London will be down here presently!”

There is little ever to relate of a journey by rail—at least, at the time of which we write, when excursion trains and concussions were not quite such every-day events as in 1851-2. Little occurred to vary the even tenor of their course. Speed was slackened, bells rung, and incomprehensible names bawled out at the due number of stations. One or two companions

were added to, and diminished from their number, with whom the Colonel entered, urbane, into conversation, and, about two o'clock, offered them refreshment, from Mrs. Winter's well-stored basket, which was thankfully accepted by his fellow-travellers, who set him down, in their private opinions, as some condescending nobleman of philanthropic habits, and enjoyed his sandwiches and sherry with redoubled *goût*. Could they have known, he was a broken gentleman, and an Irish one to boot, how soon "urbane condescension" would have changed, to pushing forwardness, and the gracious offer of a sandwich, to some deep design of getting up an acquaintance, with ulterior objects possibly still more dreadful.

At length, the closer ranks of houses and increasing hubbub of hissing engines, and departing trains, warned them, they were fast approaching the great metropolis.

The quiet and ease of their journey was at

an end, the moment they stepped from the retirement of the carriage into the bustling confusion of the plat-form, beyond which a line of cabs were drawn up, the length of which positively appalled Kate, as indicative of the immense crowd amongst whom they would have to struggle for their luggage. The additional difficulty of darkness was superadded to those already arising from crowd and hurry ; for they had not left A—— until considerably past noon.

“ Och, Holy Virgin ! how are we iver to get the thrunks in sich a scrimmige ! ” ejaculated Mrs. O’Toole.

“ We must look for the van they put them in at A——,” said Kate, who was trembling with nervous anxiety, and depressed, at feeling how unfitted she was for so bustling a scene.

“ Jest don’t be walkin off wid the masther’s portmancy,” said Mrs. O’Toole, laying a vigorous grasp on the arm of a railway porter.

“ Is this here yer’s ? ”

“Yes, an’ so is the black wan, an’ the wan wid the leather cover in the van, &c.”

And soon the civil and expeditious porters had placed all their luggage in a goodly pile.

“Now,” said the Colonel, “for the transit to Bayswater.”

“Cab, sir?”

“Yes, two.”

The Colonel and Kate led the way with their light parcels, and nurse followed with an over-flowing cargo.

It is a strange sensation, that of whirling through unknown streets by gas light. The complete ignorance of where you are going, the seemingly miraculous facility with which you are whisked round innumerable turnings, the flaring gas-light before the meaner shops, and short intervals of gloomy, respectable quarters.

Kate felt all this strongly, and sat gazing at the busy crowded streets, holding her grandfather’s hand, and scarcely breathing. It

seemed as though she had never felt the changes that had occurred in their lot before, and wearied by the journey, and the busy days that preceded it, she experienced that dread fluttering sensation, half fear, half excitement that made her long, oh, how intensely, for some familiar face to welcome them, some strong calm friend into whose arms she might throw herself, and feel *safe*.

But, "fate forbid such things to be," and a curtseying landlady received them in all the glories of an "afternoon toilette," with an elaborate front, cunningly secured with three rows of narrow black velvet round the head, and a profusion of cherry-colored ribbons in her cap.

"Here, Hester, carry up the carpet bags; Mr. Langley was here to-day ma'am, and said we might hexpect you about height o'clock, but it's near nine now; what would you please to take? I'll have candles lighted in a moment."

And she ushered them into a small parlour, furnished with a most obdurate looking horse-hair sofa, six horse hair chairs, ranged round the walls, an impracticable arm chair, and a small round table, covered with a bright red cloth; a diminutive looking glass over the mantel-piece, on which were displayed a few cheap ornaments, and a chiffonnier of mock rose-wood, with warped doors, completed the inventory.

“Tea, I think, Kate, will be the most acceptable refreshment. If you will be so good as to let us have some tea, Mrs. Mrs. ——.”

The Colonel paused.

“Crooks,” said the amiable lady.

“Ah, yes, Mrs. Crooks.”

“Certainly, sir,” and she retired, as the servant entered, with two tall candles, unsteadily thrust into very short candlesticks.

It is unnecessary to describe the wretchedness of such an arrival, the total derangement of all established comforts, and London lodging-house tea and milk ! and the professional ra-

pidity, with which the servant clatters down the plates, and deals out the knives, the ill-cleaned Britannia metal tea-pot, the pale, market looking butter, all, all so unlike home.

Nurse, who had taken Miss Vernon's *sac de nuit*, to her room, now came to the rescue.

“ Ah, don’t be breakin yer heart sthrivin to make tay, an’ the wather not half biled. There,” smelling the tea which Kate had put out, and setting it down with a look of disgust. “ Athen, ’tis little iv ye kem from Chayney, any how. Sure I put a dust iv the rale sort into me ban-box the last thing, an it’s well them villains at that moiderin Station, didn’t lose it an’ me box’ an all, have a taste iv buthered toast, here, me good girl, just bile up that kittle, an when it’s bilin mad, run up wid it; stay, I’ll go down meself.”

And Mrs. O’Toole prepared them a very refreshing cup of tea, which they insisted on her sharing; and largely did she contribute to enliven their first repast in the mighty metro-

polis, by her shrewd, caustic remarks on the various little events of their journey.

“Sure it’s so quiet, we might think ourselves in the Priory,” she said, after a pause. “Another bit of toast, Miss Kate, ye’r white wid the journey, and the scrimmage, alanah.”

“Yes,” replied the Colonel, “it is singularly quiet here.”

“But listen to that distant, continuous roar,” said Kate, “what is it?” she asked of the girl, who was removing the tea things.

“Plase ma’am it’s the ‘busses.”

They were located in one of the numerous “Albert Groves,” or “Victoria Terraces,” which congregate near, and diverge from the main Bayswater Road.

After some more desultory conversation, the little party retired to the rest they so much needed. Kate and nurse first carefully arranging the Colonel’s room ; but long after she had laid her head on the hard and diminutive lodging-house pillow, Kate’s busy fancy kept

sleep aloof—the fact that she was actually in London, was almost incredible, that the dreaded parting with the Winters, and the Priory—the terrible exchange of all the sweet sanctities of home, for the uncertainties and insecurity of lodgings—that all this so long anticipated, was absolutely accomplished ; and that from this time forward, a new world of action—of reality—of sober, stern existence, lay before her. Such thoughts as these were potent enemies to sleep. Then her last visit to the great city, and its gaieties, and studies presented themselves ; and Lady Desmond's probable return—followed by a natural chain of associations ; and finally, the Priory, with its pretty garden ; and the neighbouring woods, in all their glories of autumn—as they looked the day she found Fred Egerton seated with her grandfather, rose before her mind's eye ; and all the pleasant incidents of that happy time, unrolled themselves before her—clearly at first, but, at length strangely mingled

with memories of Dungar, and older days still. Once or twice she strove to reunite the broken chain of thought ; but slowly they all faded, and the hours of a short summer's night sped on their way ; and gradually her spirit woke from the first, deep sleep that fell upon it ; and wearied by the heaviness that had of late weighed it down, fled joyously to the scenes of its early childhood ; and summoned to its side, the friends it loved—until a flood of morning sunshine pouring into her room, woke her ; and her eyes fell upon the broad comely countenance of Mrs. O'Toole.

“Athen, the blessin’ iv Christ on ye, jewel ; sure the angels was whisperin’ to ye in Heaven—ye wor smilin’ so swate in your sleep.”

“Oh, nurse, why did you awake me ? so soon I mean.”

“Soon,” ejaculated Mrs. O'Toole, “sure it's nine o'clock, so it is, an' you that was always up at seven—”

“Nine ! is it possible ? But, nurse, are morning dreams always true ?”

“ Sure, I told ye so a hundred times, an’ ye always laughed at me, was it dreamin’ ye wor, alanah ?”

“ Yes ; of Dungar, and of such strange—but go, dear nurse—I will ring soon for you. Have you seen grandpapa this morning ? How did you sleep yourself ?”

“ He’s not rung his bell yet ; an’ I was as snug as any duchess.”

To Kate’s infinite delight, morning displayed a garden, some ten feet square, in front of their new abode, sufficient to satisfy the elastic conscience of the builder, in calling the row of houses, in which it was situated, “ Victoria Gardens.” True, it was not in that perfection of keeping, so grateful to eyes susceptible of the beautiful ; but still the green of a few ragged lilacs, and laburnums, with the perfume of a mignonette bed, was most refreshing ; and so much better than anything she

had ventured to hope for—that she felt inexpressibly cheered.

The Colonel too, had slept well—at least, till daylight, when he had been rather disturbed by the screams of a parrot, a great pet, Mrs. O'Toole informed them, of their landlady. Breakfast over, and the *Times*, secured for her grandfather, Kate was soon immersed in a long, confidential letter to Winter and his wife.

Their late breakfast had encroached, more than she thought, upon the morning, and she felt surprise when the landlady announced Mr. Langley ; and Winter's old friend entered. He was a long, pale man, with lightish hair, and whey coloured whiskers ; his manners, cold and shy, impressed Kate with an uneasy feeling, that it would be impossible to set him at ease.

“Very much obliged by your early visit,” said the Colonel, rising, with his usual suave cordiality. “We have to thank you for pro-

curing for us, such comfortable apartments—my granddaughter, Miss Vernon."

Mr. Langley bowed, and in so doing, upset a ricketty chair, whereupon, he endeavoured to restore it to its former position, and in the struggle, dropped his hat and gloves; at last his composure a little restored, by the graciousness of his new acquaintances, he gathered courage to ask, coldly, after Winter, and still more slightly for his wife, to which the Colonel replied, by giving very copious details, of their friends, and Kate thought he listened with more interest than he ventured to express in words; some general conversation then ensued—their journey, and the old city of A—, were discussed. Mr. Langley glanced once or twice at his hat, which had unfortunately got into an inaccessible corner, and Kate began to fear that this first interview, to which she had looked, as to a mine of information, whereby to form her plans, and guide her future proceedings, would pass away.

in the vain repetition of polite nothings ; while the Colonel, in his high-bred anxiety to entertain his visitor, seemed to forget there was any more serious subject to discuss, beyond the decline of the drama, or the prospects of the ministry.

It was always with extreme reluctance that Kate, ever broached any subject, connected with the realities of their position, in the presence of her grandfather, now that all the necessary changes had been made ; and to this natural difficulty, was added the awkwardness of introducing important queries, apropos to nothing. At last, taking advantage of a pause in the Colonel's eloquence, of which Mr. Langley seemed inclined to avail himself, to depart, she plunged boldly, because desperately, into the subject uppermost in her thoughts.

“ I am most anxious to lose no time in endeavouring to get pupils. Mr. Winter mentioned to you, I suppose ? ”

“Yes;” said Langley, turning to her with more of complacency, than his manner had hitherto exhibited, his painter’s eye, probably caught by her expressive countenance, and graceful figure. “Yes, he mentioned your intention—and I—that is, I hope you will not disapprove; I told some friends of mine, professors of music, and they wish to hear you play; and then they will be able to judge how far they can forward your views.”

“Thank you,” cried Kate, glancing nervously at the Colonel, to whose high and usually pale forehead the color rose at this proposed exhibition of his refined, noble, and graceful grandchild; “you are most kind to have anticipated my arrival; but,” she added, covering her face playfully with her hands, “I never shall have courage for such an exhibition, such an ordeal!”

“But if they never hear you perform, how can they recommend you?” asked Langley, in a matter-of-fact tone.

“I did but jest,” replied Kate, “and am ready to do whatever you may recommend.”

“Of course, if it is repugnant to Miss Vernon, however friendly and judicious your suggestion, Mr. Langley, I cannot permit her,” began the Colonel, in disturbed accents.

“Dearest grandpapa, this matter is between Mr. Langley and myself—you may listen—but are not to interfere. Am I not right, Mr. Langley?”

He bowed, startled into silent admiration, by the extreme beauty of her smile.

“I am silenced,” said the Colonel.

“Winter mentioned,” resumed Langley, after a moment’s pause, “that you were a pupil of Hermann’s; I would advise your renewing your acquaintance with him; he is one of the first masters, in the fashionable world, at present.”

“I fully intend writing to him to-morrow, and—”

“Why not to day?” interposed Langley,

with increasing warmth. "And merely ask him to appoint an interview—be sure you see him—writing is of little use—besides he has a daughter—I mean two—amiable girls, I am told—indeed I know one of them. Miss Vernon," addressing the Colonel, "can, therefore, call on him with perfect propriety, for he could never otherwise see her, his time is so much occupied."

The Colonel, again reddening to the roots of his hair, made a silent inclination of his head, too much overcome at the idea of Kate's being compelled to call on any man, to be able to infringe upon her injunction.

"Unfortunately," resumed Langley, "I have no one to do the honors of my house; but my sister, who lives close by here, intends to do herself the pleasure of calling on you, Miss Vernon, and hopes to fix some evening, when I can introduce you to some professional friends—but I see you have no piano."

"We shall be most happy to make your

sister's acquaintance ; my piano is still at A.— ; but I hope to have it early next week —only I am sure I cannot think where it can stand in this diminutive chamber."

"But it is essential ; you so soon lose the facility of execution. Winter tells me, you play well ; and he is no mean judge."

"I trust you may be of the same opinion ; but the degree of perfection required from musicians appals me !"

"Nothing mediocre goes down now," returned Langley, with an emphasis, not very encouraging. "And as I believe I have paid you a long visit," rising nervously ; "my sister would have accompanied me, but one of her little boys is ill. I hope she may soon be released—I mean, be able to call on you. She knows several people about here, all with young families. Ah, good morning, Miss Vernon, good morning, sir."

"I shall take an early opportunity of re-

turning your visit," said the Colonel, accompanying him to the door.

"Pray do; and as Mr. Winter tells me, Miss Vernon is a lover of paintings, perhaps she might like to take a look at my studio?"

"Oh, thank you," cried Kate, who had followed them. "I shall be delighted."

"Good morning, then."

"This seems promising, dear grandpapa," said Kate, settling back to her writing, with a sunny smile. "I am so glad I saw Mr. Langley, before I closed my letter; he appears friendly, though certainly not brilliant."

"Promising, Kate," cried the Colonel, playing nervously with his glasses, and holding the paper aside in one hand, "promising! It is unutterably repugnant to my feelings to think, that you will have to exhibit your *paces*, or your performance rather, to secure the suffrages of a set of fiddlers, and to wait upon a fat German, who, I remember, used to

seem to abjure water, and wore a ring on his thumb. This Mr. Langley seems to forget what is due to a gentlewoman altogether, or to be totally ignorant of it. And, only that I was afraid of vexing you, my love, I would have told him so. Cold-blooded John Bull!"

"I should indeed have been greatly distressed had you done so," said Kate. "You know, dearest and best, I am only known to him in my new character; and is it not unreasonable to be displeased with him, because he endeavours, according to his judgment, which I believe to be the true one, to forward my views!"

"Instinct might have told him, yours was a peculiar case! to tell you to call on a German music-master!"

"Pooh, grandpapa, as Mr. Winter would say, if you and I were staying at the 'Clarendon,' *en route* to Paris, you would be the first to encourage me in paying a visit to my old master, why—"

“It is a totally different thing, this old German—”

“True, and it may be prejudice ; but, under the circumstances, I would prefer visiting a German to an English music-master. My own, dear grandpapa, we must be content to lose the shadow, if we can secure the substance ; and now I must proceed to finish my letter.”

Hastily finishing her long, crossed epistle to the Winters, she proceeded to pen a billet to Hermann, recalling herself to his recollection, and expressing a strong desire for an interview with him ; this was placed *selon les règles* in an envelop, when a grand difficulty presented itself—the address—“He used to live in Baker Street, but I forgot the number.” She rung.

“Would Mrs. Crooks be so good as to let me see a directory ?”

“Please ‘em, she’s not got one.”

“How provoking ! and it is just post hour !”

“Send that note on chance,” suggested the Colonel ; “and we can get the right address from Langley, if it fails.”

“Good,” she replied ; and sent both her epistles at once to the post.

The day, notwithstanding the promise of the morning, proved wet ; but Langley’s long visit, and her long letter, made it pass quickly to Kate. She now put away her writing materials, singing snatches of her favourite songs, to her grandfather’s surprise, and looking bright as an embodied gleam of sunshine ; the idea of speedy action was cheering beyond measure, to her energetic, earnest spirit ; and though it may lower her in the estimation of sentimentalists and evangelicals, she was too young and too light-hearted, not to feel considerable pleasure, at the idea of a *soirée* at Langley’s sister’s.

“Are ye ready for yer dinner, Miss Kate ? an’ would the masther mind the girl layin’

the cloth ?" enquired Mrs. O'Toole, putting in her head.

" Certainly not," replied the Colonel.

" I have not seen you all day, nurse," said Kate, " what have you been doing."

" I wint out to get some chops for yer dinners, an' the thief iv a butcher asks me nine-pince a pound for thim. ' Is it jokin' ye are,' ses I, ' mum,' ses he, as if he was bothered. ' Is it plum cake ye do be feedin' yer sheep on,' ses I, ' to go be afther askin' nine-pince a pound for thim chops,' ses I, wid that he ups and he ses, his mate was the best an' the chapest in the place, an' I'd get nothin' ondher it; an' sure enough I wint to ivery butcher widin' two miles, an' sorra one iv thim ud give the chops for less, an' some asked more ; there's London for ye ! But it ud break yer heart to see the woman sthrivin' to brile thim on the hanful iv coals in wan corner iv the grate, I wish ye'd spake to her to let me cook for yes,

but—" Nurse suddenly paused, and held up her hand to enforce silence, as an approaching jingle announced the coming dinner apparatus.

" Have you dined yourself, dear nurse?" asked Kate.

" Sure I tuck a cup iv tay, an' an egg, sorra sich an egg iver I seen ! Ye know it's a fast day, Miss Kate."

Their dinner was soon despatched ; the half cold, half raw chops, so different from their simple yet tempting fare at home, offering little to induce its prolongation. After its removal, Kate looked wistfully from the window.

" It does not rain now, grandpapa, would you not like a stroll into Kensington Gardens ? I should like so much too, to find out some library, for how shall we get over this evening without music, or work, or books, or chess. Oh, I forgot, nurse has unpacked the chess-board."

" I am not inclined for walking, or chess,

either, my love ; indeed I am singularly knocked up ; I should like a book, however."

" But I am sure a little walk would do you good, dear grandpapa."

" No, my dear, I will take a sleep, and, if you like to go out, nurse can go with you, it will be a pleasure to her too."

After settling the Colonel to the best of her ability in the impracticable arm-chair ; Kate summoned Mrs. O'Toole, who most readily obeyed her call, heartily tired of the society of Mrs. Crooks, for, as she said emphatically, " there's no divarshin in thim English !"

After enquiring their way to the nearest circulating library, Kate and Mrs. O'Toole set out on their exploring expedition. The rain had ceased, and a rich, yellow, evening sun shone out in full lustre.

" How new everything looks here, nurse," said Kate, when they had walked a few

minutes in silence, “ how different from dear old A——.”

“ In troth it does, Miss Kate ; but thim gardens, as they call thim, is mighty fine, an’ did ye iver see sich dawshy little houses, wid balconies afore ?”

“ Never, indeed, they give me the idea of handsomely ornamented mansions, seen through an inverted telescope, for there is a little of everything about them.”

“ Athen wan, good, ould, red stone house, like what was in A——, is worth a score iv them.”

The extreme newness of everything, notwithstanding its prettiness and neatness, was displeasing to Kate’s eye, accustomed, as it had been, to the mellow tints and picturesque irregularity of A——.

It is remarkable how much more congenial, both to heart and mind, are indefinite and irregular outlines ; as if the more perfect finish,

was all too cramped, too finite to satisfy the boundless and formless imaginations of man's heart ; as Tupper beautifully says,

“ Thinkest thou the thousand eyes that shine with rapture
on a ruin,
Would have looked with half their wonder on a perfect
pile ?
And wherefore not—but that light tints, suggesting un-
seen beauties,
Fill the complacent gazer with self grown conceits ?”

The library was, without much difficulty, found, and the demure damsel, who there represented the muses, in reply to Kate's enquiries, handed her a catalogue, in which she soon lost herself, as one usually does in the vain attempt to discover favorite authors, widely separated by an inexorable alphabetical arrangement.

“ Have you nothing by the authoress of
‘ The Cup and the Lip ? ’ ” asked Kate.

“ Yes, ma’am, but it’s out; this work is a good deal called for,” presenting a volume open at the title page.

Kate glanced at it, ‘ Zarifa, a Tale of the Passions.’

“ No, thank you,” said Miss Vernon.

“ Just got this in, ma’am; ‘ Trials and Trifles, by one who has experienced both.’ ”

“ Let me look at it, if you please. Ah, this is rather too sentimental. Have you the ‘ Knight of Gwynne’ ?”

“ Yes’m.”

“ Then I will take it; and pray send the ‘ Times’ every morning, to No. — Victoria Gardens, for Colonel Vernon, if you please.”

A rather stout gentleman, with longish fair hair, and an umbrella under his arm, who had entered the shop a few minutes before, and stood with two letters in his hand, waiting until the shopwoman was at leisure to attend to him, and in a position that commanded an

excellent view of Kate's profile ; started at these words.

"Vernon,!" said he, in good English, but with a foreign accent. "Do I speak to my gentle pupil ? Ah, you remember?"

"Mr. Herman!" she exclaimed, after a moment's hesitation, "how fortunate ! how happy I am to have met you ; I have just written to you."

"It is most curious," resumed her *ei-devant* master, shaking her hand warmly and respectfully, "I do not think I ever entered a shop in this neighbourhood before, but I have just come from Madame M——'s establishment, where I, for my sins, give lessons once a-week ; and you, have you been long in town ? How is the Graffin, your cousin ? I suppose with you ?"

"No, she is at Florence, I am with grand-papa, close to this. We only arrived in London, yesterday, and I have already written a

note to you, though I had forgotten your precise address."

"Oh, the old place, Baker Street, No. 33. And you want lessons again? Well, you did me great credit, and though I have not one moment in the day disengaged, except to snatch a hasty meal, I'll break through my regulations, and give you the evening hour."

"Thank you very much," said Kate, interrupting, with difficulty, the flow of his eloquence, "but I do not want to take lessons; I wrote to ask you to appoint a day and hour, when I might call on you—any hour will suit me—then I will tell you the object of my visit."

"Call upon me!" repeated Hermann, with surprise, "well, well, I am afraid I must not offer to save you that trouble, for I am in such request just at present. Ah, if you would not mind calling so early as twelve o'clock, I generally snatch a hasty lunch, at that hour. If I am not at home when you come, my daughter

will endeavour to entertain you until my return, and now I must run away."

"But what day, Mr. Herman?" cried Kate, anxiously.

"Oh, the day after to-morrow, I shall have a little more time; infinitely pleased to have met you, dear lady, and to perceive you have the same appearance of good health as ----. Hey! ho!" shouted the good natured musico, rushing breathlessly after an omnibus, into which an active conductor, rapidly crammed him, and he was swept off.

This little adventure quite excited Kate, and although capable of exerting great self-command, her temperament was too finely organised, not to be both nervous and sensitive; so the arm she passed through nurse's was not the steadiest, as they turned to leave the shop.

"Och, what makes ye thrimble so, agra?"

"Do I tremble, nurse? I suppose it must

be the surprise of meeting Mr. Herman ; how fortunate ? I accept it as a good omen !”

“ Faith, he’s mighty like a pear—so big at one end, an’ small at the other. Sure he’s like the side iv a house round the shoulders, an’ his two little feet u’d stand in a tay cup, an’ what wide throwsers he has !”

“ Do you not remember him when we were at Lady Desmond’s three years ago ?”

“ Och now, was that the Garman that used to be tachin ye the piania ?”

Kate nodded.

“ Och then, my gracious, but he’s grown very fat.”

Miss Vernon was too much engrossed by her own reflections on the probable result of this rencontre, to encourage nurse’s garrulity, till the beauty of the magnificent old trees in Kensington, drew her from her thoughts, and she pointed her companion’s attention to the long alleys, with their graceful

leafy arches, that stretch along each side of the broad walk from the Bayswater entrance.

And deeply did Mrs. O'Toole enjoy the confidential chat in which her idolized nurseling indulged her, especially the perspective of an evening party.

“Sure it’s taydious to be always alone with an ould gintleman like the master. God bless him any how, though faith it’s himself is the height of good company.”

“I never tire of him, nurse.”

“No, in coorse not; but, Miss Kate, jewel, ye’ll be lavin him some day, with some grand lord, ye’ll see at them parties.”

“I do not fancy lords are so very plentiful at the Bayswater *soireés*,” replied Kate, laughing at nurse’s simplicity.

“A then, ye’ll never see wan that’s grander or pleasanter, nor the Captin; I niver tuck to any one as I tuck to him; to see the illigant bould step iv him, an the bright face iv him,

an' he as tindher hearted as an infant. Och sure, Miss Kate, there's some fairy gift about a rale gentleman ! Jist hear wan say, ' how are ye,' an ye feel the better iv it, as if he was in airnest, an pleased to see ye. But wan iv thim squireens ! faith it's like rubbin the coat iv a cat the wrong way, to hear wan iv thim sthrivin to spake civil!"

"Very true nurse, there is some mysterious charm about good nanner, but it must spring from the heart, and I believe when all are true christians, all will be real gentlemen."

"Athin, is it sarious ye are, Miss Kate?"

After a little more conversation, they returned to the Colonel, whom they found awake, but still reclining with an air of lassitude, in the arm chair. Kate at once, and with much animation, commenced an account of her meeting with Herman, but the indifference with which her grandfather received the intelligence, so important in her estimation, checked her adour, and seemed to throw her

back on herself; it is indeed wonderful the effect which sympathy or no sympathy produces.

The Colonel's coldness did not alter the fact of the lucky rencontre, or of Herman's kindness of manner, and yet it seemed to dissolve her air castles, about numerous pupils, friendly associates, and a happy busy life of useful occupation, not unmixed with amusement, into a chilling mist, as night winds condense the vapours, which have been spread by the sun's heat.

"Well let us have tea my dear, what book did you get?"

"'The Knight of Gwynne,' grandpapa."

"Ah, I suppose that is meant for my old friend, Maurice Fitzgerald, it will remind me forcibly of days I had better forget."

"I hope it will amuse you," said poor Kate, the tears springing to her eyes, at such unwonted depression and contrariety, on her grandfather's part.

Tea over; and the remaining day-light of a summer's evening—which, in town, has anything but a cheering effect—shut out, Miss Vernon lit the candles, and, after a diligent search, unearthed a small and rather delapidated footstool, from beneath the sofa, which she placed under the Colonel's feet, endeavouring, with unwearied sweetness, to cheer him, and draw him from himself, and his position, till, at length, he gave the wished-for command—

“Read some of that book for me, my dear.”

“Yes, dearest grandpapa; and as poor nurse is all alone, among strangers, may I ask her to bring in her work, and listen too?”

“Certainly—certainly.”

This was quickly done; and Kate's object, to provide amusement for the Colonel, fulfilled, as nurse's shrewd remarks on whatever subject was brought before her, were sure to interest and amuse her indulgent master.

He leaned back his head, and closed his

eyes, as if but half inclined to listen ; soon, however, the varied modulations of Kate's musical, intellectual voice, and the sound of familiar names, fixed his attention, and transported him, in imagination, to other scenes and other times ; and, at length, fully drawn from the contemplation of the present, it was with something of his old brightness of eyes, and lightness of step, that the Colonel retired for the night.

“ Well, Nelly, those were pleasant times, and right good fellows. I think Lever has hit off some of them capitally ; yet I could give him a few hints, hey ? Kate, good night, my love —I will take a walk with you to-morrow.”

And Kate laid her head on her pillow, blessing Lever for having effected by his light-hearted, familiar style, what no writer, however profound, or grand, pathetic, or even religious, would in all probability have accomplished.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW WORLD CONTINUED.

THE morning of Miss Vernon's visit to her *ci-devant* music-master rose bright and clear ; and smiling at her own care, it was with rather more than usual attention to her appearance, she arranged her simple toilette ; for, thought she, “ I am to meet his daughter—and women judge so much more critically of dress than men.”

The Colonel's announcement of his intention to accompany her, called forth all her tact to avoid the escort. She remembered keenly, the effect produced on him, by Mr.

Langley's plain, unvarnished communications ; and, as he had now apparently forgotten them, and returned to his usual happy, easy frame of mind, she dreaded the renewal of those unpleasant sensations, which had so disturbed him, by the discussion of the important questions of pounds, shillings, and pence, which she was nerving heaself to approach boldly ; besides, she did not feel quite certain, how Herman would take the intelligence she had to communicate. Then she dreaded that the kind old man might fancy himself *de trop*.

“ I am afraid, dear grandpapa, we must start so early, you will not have time to read the paper comfortably.”

“ It cannot take more than half-an-hour to drive from this to Baker Street ?”

“ I intended walking. Cabs are so expensive.”

“ Why, Kate, my love, you are grown quite miserly.”

Finally, she managed to insinuate a strong

necessity that he should return Mr. Langley's call, and fix a day for her to visit his studio, and carried her point, that she and Mrs. O'Toole should walk to Baker Street, by the Park, while the Colonel was pacified, by the paper, and the projected visit to Langley.

“Good bye, my own, dear grandpapa—am I looking nice?”

“Yes, darling, like a rose-bud, as you are.”

And he gazed proudly at her, over his glasses, as she stood before him in her simple, elegant, muslin dress, straw bonnet, with plain white ribbon, and large, soft *barége* shawl.

“There isn't the like iv her in Buckingham Palace!” said Mrs. O'Toole, with a confidential nod, as she followed her out of the room.

“Keep to the Parks, till you come to the Marble Arch, then down Oxford Street—any one will show you the way to Portman Square, and—”

“Oh, thank you, Mrs. Crooks, once I am in Portman Square, I shall know my way.”

Kate was not quite so agreeable a companion as usual during this walk, as she felt considerable nervousness about the approaching interview.

Nurse, too, greatly disliking the errand on which they were bound, spoke little, except an occasional ejaculation of pious discontent, or a growl at the various conductors, who kindly invited them to ride in their omnibusses.

Their walk was, therefore, silent and fatiguing ; but Baker Street was gained at last.

“Not at home, ‘m,” said a smart girl, with a cap at the back of her head, in reply to Miss Vernon’s enquiries.

“And Miss Herman ?”

“Oh, Miss Herman is at home, ‘m—please walk this way.”

“Nurse, will you wait for me.”

And Kate followed the servant up a handsomely carpeted stair-case.

Miss Herman was working something in a frame ; she was more English-looking than her

father, with a profusion of fair hair, and in a very handsome morning costume.

“I have expected to see Miss Vernon,” she said, rising to receive her visitor, with much graciousness, and rather too much ease. “My father told me, he expected a visit from one of his former pupils.”

“I was so fortunate as to meet him accidentally, the day before yesterday, and was delighted to renew my acquaintance with him.”

“I have often heard my father speak of you, and of your great taste for music; you were quite one of his pet pupils. I expect him in immediately.”

And the two young ladies were soon excellent friends, the more so, as Kate’s new acquaintance was quite able to make up for any silence or pre-occupation, on her part, caused by the nervous anxiety with which we watch for an important interview.

Miss Herman was evidently rather curious

as to the object of Kate's visit to her father ; and Kate saw no reason why she should not gratify her curiosity ; for, pre-occupied as she was, any other topic was irksome ; and though not exactly of the stamp she had been accustomed to, it was so long since she had enjoyed a conversation with a lady, at all near her own age, that she found it a pleasant variety. Yet it was with a sensation of relief, that poor Kate hailed her exclamation—

“ There is my father's knock.”

In another moment, he bustled into the room.

“ Rather late, dear lady ; but much pleased to see you.”

“ Luncheon directly, Gertrude.”

Then seating himself by Kate, as his daughter left the room —

“ Now let me hear in what I can serve you, my dear Miss Vernon, for I got your note all safe.”

Kate hesitated a moment, and then, her color rising, yet with a certain playfulness, and without any preface, said—

“ You thought I wanted to take lessons from you, my dear sir—no ; I want pupils myself.”

Herman uttered a slight groan.

“ I was apprehensive of something of the kind, when I read your note ; yet I turned from the idea, as quite preposterous ; and your noble relative !”

“ She knows nothing of my intention. But my dear Mr. Herman,” continued Kate, with a firmness and decision, that surprised even herself, “ let us not waste time in deplored what is inevitable ; believe me, there is a strong necessity for the step I am about to take, which does not, considered in the abstract, offer any great attractions ; the question is, can you, and will you, kindly put me in the way of carrying out my views ; to say that I have been your pupil, would, I am sure

be greatly in my favour ; but I want more than that; to introduce me, in my new career."

" Dear lady : I happen, it is true, to be rather the fashion as a musical teacher, just at present ; and I should be most happy to serve you ; but, though I gave you lessons for three or four months, I cannot say I trained you ; and I have some pupils, brought up to music as their profession, whom I must consider first ; besides though you had great talent, as an amateur, it is a different thing for a teacher, ah—have you kept up your music ?"

" Yes, most diligently," replied Kate, who felt her cheeks hot, and her hands cold, during this speech of Herman's.

" Well then," rising, and opening a grand piano, " let me hear you play, and I will tell you exactly what I think ; now you must hear the truth."

" It is all ask."

Miss Vernon, threw aside her bonnet and shawl, and seated herself at the piano ; but her memory seemed suddenly clouded, by the very

necessity for clearness, nay, her physical vision, by the intense anxiety to acquit herself well, and while the room swam before her, the only distinct image she could perceive, was Hermann, standing opposite, with a look of severe criticism on his countenance ; but this moment of suffering did not last—Kate was making rapid strides in the acquirement of that self-command, without which, the empire of the world is but a wider range for the sceptred slave. “ I must be calm—I will not be false to myself,” she thought, and pressing her hands to her eyes for an instant, she conjured up the organist’s pale, benevolent face, as it used to look, when he listened to her playing, and thus placed her spirit once more within the calm influence of her old cloistered home ; then with a true and steady finger, began a fantasia, composed by Hermann himself. He started at the first notes—and listened with wrapt attention, quite as much the effect of her performance, as his own will. His daughter

entered—he held up a warning finger, to enjoin silence—she came to listen ; but whether there was one listener or a thousand, was now a matter of indifference to Kate, who absorbed in the music, and revelling in the tones of a magnificent instrument, after nearly a week's fast, poured forth the really beautiful composition, with a fervour of feeling, and a perfection of execution, that quite astonished her hearers ; and when at length, after some beautiful and difficult runs, the piece ended with sustained chords, the German burst into exclamations of delight, in his native tongue—echoed by his daughter ; while Kate, agitated by her success, stood quite still—silent from her utter inability to articulate.

“ But it is wonderful how well you have remembered my instructions, I shall certainly mention you everywhere, as my pupil—my advanced pupil. And now we will have our luncheon—let me offer you my arm. Do you sing ?”

“Yes.”

“Ah, then, we will first have a song.”

“No, no, Mr. Herman, I was foolishly nervous about playing, and now I feel hardly able to speak much less to sing.”

“Well then, you must come and have a glass of wine to restore you.”

During the progress of the luncheon, Kate learned many particulars, as to the usual rates of remuneration, &c. ; and was surprised to find it so low.

“As a beginner you can hardly hope to get much,” said Hermann, who was devouring veal pie and pickled cabbage, with great appetite ; “but I hope to be of use to you here too ; I will try to get you the best terms I can, and you will agree to whatever I arrange ?”

“Of course ; you are most kind, my dear sir ; but how soon do you think you will be able to get me some pupils ?”

“We shall see—we shall see—you must not

be in a hurry ; and Gertrude, give me that portfolio. Here," said he, " here is a simple air, harmonise it in four parts, at your leisure, and enclose it to me, that will show me what you know of theory ; if you would consent to play and sing at private concerts, you might make a very good thing of it ; and with your figure and face, I—"

" Hush, hush," cried Kate, with an involuntary action, and holding up her hand, as if to repel by physical force, the idea suggested by Herman, " It is useless to mention such a plan."

" Well well, as you like—but it is the pleasantest and most lucrative line by far ; and now, dear lady, I must run away—I am beyond my time, and the old Duchess of L—— is as sharp as a needle about a minute more or less of the lesson. God bless you—write your address in my book, I might lose your note—you are a pupil I may well be proud of. Good bye," and he bustled off.

After a few more civil words with Miss Herman; and writing her name and address in the book, Herman kept for the purpose, Kate took her leave.

“I hope to have the pleasure of calling on you,” said Miss Herman.

“I shall be most happy to see you, and to introduce you to grandpapa.”

“If I do not call soon, pray excuse me, as I have many engagements. Are there any omnibusses pass near your house?”

“Oh, yes, several. I think I had better take one going back—they are not very disagreeable—are they?”

“Why, have you never been in an omnibus?” said Miss Herman, with some surprise.

“Never as yet.”

And (nurse having appeared from the lower regions,) Kate shook hands once more with her lively, good-humoured, new acquaintance, and departed in high spirits at the result of her visit.”

“ I am very tired, nurse, and I am sure so are you.”

“ Is it tired, Miss Kate? not a bit iv it; sure was’nt I aitin the best iv cauld beef, an’ dhrinkin’ the best iv ale, down in the house-keeper’s parlour, they seem mighty nice kind of people, an’ there was wan of thim with the quarest cap.”

“ There, dear nurse, call that omnibus.”

“ Och, sure, Miss Kate, ye would’nt be afther goin’ into wan iv the like iv thim; its nothin’s but the counter-jumpers goes in thim.”

“ No matter, the sooner I get used to them the better,” said Miss Vernon, resolute not to do things by halves but to descend freely, and, therefore, gracefully. “ So do not let another pass, nurse, for indeed I am very tired.”

“ Oh, blessed Bridget! Oh, marciful Moses, look at this! did iver I think to—Stop, will ye, have ye no eyes in yer head, ye thief? ye wor niver tired bawlin’ to us to go wid yez whin we did’nt want ye.”

“ Bayswater, mum—yes, mum,” and Kate and Mrs. O’Toole were crammed into a vehicle, apparently full to overflowing ; at least so Kate thought, though the conductor assured them he had not got his number. The occupants, as usual, would not at first open their ranks, and it was not until after some moments of uneasy balancing and staggering, that our two novices in omnibus travelling, were accommodated with seats, as far as possible from the door of the carriage. Nurse, who was of tolerable dimensions, reducing two angular old maiden ladies to scarcely visible lines ; while poor Kate, with a feeling of deep repugnance, was squeezed between a fat, elderly man and the upper end of the conveyance ; the road appeared interminable, and, owing to their unacquaintance with it, and their inexperience of omnibus travel, they were carried far beyond their destination.

Never had the sight of her grandfather’s face

been so welcome to Kate, as when she saw him looking from the window on their return ; after the various small, but not the less trying, trials of the day ; and joyous was the tone, in which she exclaimed—“ *victoria, dearest grandpapa,* ” as she threw off her bonnet and shawl.

“ Come and tell me all about it, dearest,” said he, holding out his hand to her.

She seated herself beside him, and detailed her interview with Herman, brightening the brighter parts, and subduing the darker, with exquisite pious tact ; and then, turning from the subject of her own plans, which always fretted the old gentleman, enquired what his movements had been, and if there was a letter from the Winters ?

“ No, none,” said the Colonel.

“ Well, I will go and get ready for dinner, and afterwards we will have a short stroll in the gardens. Perhaps this evening’s post may bring us a letter from our friends. Nurse is

a capital chaperone, and I am glad you did not go, dear grandpapa, it would have been quite too much for you."

After this nothing could surpass the unbroken but rather gloomy quiet, in which Kate's days slipped by ; her piano having arrived, was a great source of enjoyment to her, and lent wings to many a heavy hour.

Winter, though kind, was like most men, a tardy correspondent, and Kate was ashamed of writing as often as her heart dictated. Lady Desmond, too, engrossed by some new pleasure or occupation, wrote, though affectionately, but seldom ; and at times the sad feeling, that to the friends who are afar, we are as nothing, scarcely missed, and merely remembered, through the importunate efforts of our own pen, would steal over Kate's mind in spite of every effort of reason and common sense ; for hers was a nature too noble, too unexacting, to doubt the kindness or the truth of those who professed either. Yet it is hard, very

hard, not to become restless and complaining, when, day after day, the letter carrier hurries past, or worse still, his startling, though hoped for, knock, thrills every pulse, and there is nothing for you. Oh, you who are still left in peace and security, amongst all that has been endeared to you in childhood and in youth; amongst kindred and familiar faces; and scenes of beauty associated with happiness, and disregarded in the full certainty of possession; think well before you charge the absent with querulous avidity for letters; you cannot know, you cannot dream the intense longing with which we turn from the looks and tones, the places and the people around us, and conjure up old scenes and voices, long unheard; and then ask again, and again, with a mournful tenderness, unspeakable in its depth, "Shall I never see them more?" while a gloomy echo from our own unspoken presage answers, "they are gone—they are all passed by;" ay, passed indeed, for what is gone is eternally passed by.

“Speak to them that they go forward,” is the message of God to mankind, as to the Israelites of old ; forward we must go, on—on, in sin or in righteousness ; there is no pause, and what is left is left for ever !

Kate felt an extraordinary longing to have the old hound, Cormac, with her once more, and wrote on the subject to Mr. Winter. As usual, when any positive question was to be answered, his reply was prompt.

“ Cannot you leave the dog where he is ?” wrote the testy little artist, “ I tell you he will be a troublesome customer ; even here he is quite savage, and we have to throw him his meat from a civil distance.”

“ Poor Cormac !” sighed Kate, who was reading the letter aloud to her grandfather, “ how unhappy he must be, when he is so cross ; he will become irretrievably savage if we do not remove him ; may I write about him, dear grandpapa, at once ?”

"Oh, yes, my dear," said the Colonel.

"Besides," resuming the letter, "your lodgings are too dear already, and Cormac will be an addition to them. I dare say you find your money slipping away fast enough; I hope you remember you have a balance of thirty pounds in my hands, after the sale of the furniture, so do not think about Cormac at present. Poor Gilpin is very ill, and cannot last long. What is Herman about? I think he is a humbug; and what's become of Langley's sister, that was to have called on you. I remember her a good humoured woman, that murdered the King's English, her husband is very well off, she ought to have some girls to be taught."

The letter ended with a kind message from Mrs. Winter, who seldom wrote, and left an uneasy unpleasant impression on Kate's mind.

"Well, I will write about Cormac, I so long to have him to walk with me," she said,

after a moment's thought. Beginning her letter with excuses for so imprudent a proceeding, to her terrible mentor, she continued—

“ The complete disappearance of all the agents through whom I hoped to achieve, such great things from the little stage of my life, is indeed marvellous, and so dispiriting that I felt inclined to most unbecoming impatience when I read your letter, in which you, as usual, set forth, so forcibly, important points; but second thoughts are best *maestro mio*. Let us give them the benefit of our doubts; both Miss Herman and Mrs. Storey may be out of town, or unwell, or any thing you like, and while it is better for my heart and spirits to fancy my *ci-devant* music-master moving heaven and earth, though unsuccessful in my behalf, than to imagine him playing me false, by culpable negligence, let me think so; I must wait; so let the imagination I so often indulged, in happier days, show her gratitude by lightening the interval of wretched doubt. Is this

right? If you think so, say it, for I am not, heaven knows, so strong that I can dispense with the wholesome encouragement of friendly approbation ; and though there is great support in the whisperings of an approving conscience, yet it is wonderfully comforting to have its accents echoed by a voice one loves. By the arrangements I have made here, Cormac's advent will add nothing to our expenses, and I am sure his absence will be a relief to you."

Miss Vernon went to Euston Square, accompanied by Mrs. O'Toole, to meet him, and the joy of the old hound, at sight of her, was quite touching.

"We are afraid to go near him, ma'am," said the porter, who led them to where he was chained, "he's the fiercest dog we ever had charge on."

But Kate fearlessly went up to him, and unfastened his chain, while he almost over-powered her by his uncouth caresses, to the

dread of the beholders. Then sitting close by her, his head stretched up that he might look in her face, and only noticing Mrs. O'Toole, by an occasional lick, he remained as docile as a lamb.

Kate and nurse walked gaily home with him, feeling they had gained the addition of a friend to their society ; indeed Cormac conducted himself with so much discretion, that the smiling, because regularly paid, landlady observed, he was, “ a perfect hangel in disposition.”

As if pleasures and pains were equally gregarious, Mr. Langley called just as they were going to tea. He was livelier than usual, and explained his own and his sister’s apparent inattention, by informing them that she had been obliged to take her little boy to the Isle of Wight, for change of air ; that he had accompanied them for the same purpose, and had there met Miss Herman, who was on a visit to her married sister. Thus were all Kate’s

doubts satisfactorily cleared up, and the very lightness of heart which these few words of explanation produced, proved to her how heavily their silence and apparent neglect had preyed upon her spirits. It was no wonder therefore that Langley felt surprised he had not before been struck by the brilliancy as well as the sweetness of her face; she played, and sang for him too, for the first time, and although he said little, was evidently charmed by a degree of excellence he was in no wise prepared for.

He left them at an early hour (after an offer of books from his collection), considerably cheered by his visit. He had been much more agreeable than usual, indeed there was something in the noble manner of Colonel Vernon, in the grace and piquancy of his grandchild, in her perfect freedom from all idea of self; and spirited intelligent assumption of her right to think *for* herself—that attracted the taciturn, though well informed, Langley, in no common degree. He had a bad opinion

of women in general—like many men, he divided them into two classes, fools and knaves ; and could not imagine the combination of heart and intellect—yet Kate's original, observations, surprised him by their freshness, while it was impossible to look upon her sweet, but ~~fine~~ noble countenance — and doubt that if ever the spirit of truth had stamped its impress on a human soul, that soul was hers.

CHAPTER VI.

RESIGNATION.

NEARLY two months had elapsed since the Vernons left A——; and affairs wore much the same aspect as the first days of their arrival in town. Miss Herman had called on Kate, on her return from the Isle of Wight, and Kate had, *selon les regles*, returned the visit; and not liking to trespass on Herman's time, unnecessarily, had written merely to ask some trifling question, and thus, remind him of his promise; in reply to which, she received a vague assurance of his readiness to serve her, and a recommendation to patience.

Meantime, parliament was within a few days of its prorogation—town fast thinning—and the season, to all intents and purposes, over. This was indeed a trying time ; and no portion of it so trying, as when the Colonel sunk into his evening sleep. Kate then ventured to release her thoughts from the books, or work, on which she always endeavoured to fix them, in his presence, lest he should think her pre-occupied or depressed ; and sometimes gazing from the window, at the slowly closing evening—sometimes fixing her eyes on the beloved face, which, freed from constraint, bore a pained expression—too truly indicative of internal feeling—occasionally an uneasy sigh would escape him, or some muttered word ; and, oh ! the inexpressible tenderness and anguish that would then swell his grandchild's heart.

Did you ever watch one you loved, asleep ? if not, you never knew of how much love your nature was capable ; yet these communings with self, like Jacob's wrestling with the

angel, left a blessing behind—though the frequent, bitter, passionate questions—“Why is it so? Why is he, who would turn aside, rather than tread upon a worm; whose strong, warm heart, was chiefly pleased in shewing mercy and pity—why is he thus tried, and left desolate, now when the years are come in which he has no pleasure?” would rise to her lips; and, hard, hard was it to suppress them, for Kate Vernon’s heart beat with too strong, too passionate a pulse, not to feel that chastening was very grievous; nor could she frame unreal words of resignation—when the strong turmoil of her breast, lay open to the All-seeing—she could but cry, from out its troubled depths—“Behold, O Lord, and see!”

One morning, her grandfather was reading aloud to her—she sometimes made him do so—it fixed his attention more—when the door was opened suddenly, and a lady presented herself, unannounced. She was richly dressed in rather showy colors, and held a large em-

broidered lace-edged handkerchief in her hand. The Colonel and Kate both rose.

“ Miss Vernon, I presume !”

“ Yes,” she replied, advancing.

The visitor presented a card ; and Kate, glancing at it, exclaimed—

“ Ah ! Mrs. Storey—grandpapa—Mr. Langley’s sister.”

And mutual civilities were exchanged.

The new comer was slightly consequential, inclined to talk of her husband’s firm, as of a subject of universal and recognized interest ; she was a little patronising too ; but evidently charmed and subdued by the inexpressible tone of deference and esteem which characterised the Colonel’s manner to women, and to which few ladies, connected with even the most eminent firms, are accustomed.

“ I am come on a double errand,” said she, to Kate, after explaining about her long delayed visit—“ one, to hand you this note ; the

other, to beg you and Colonel Vernon will kindly consent to join a small circle of friends, at my house, on Thursday evening, though I have made the request rather unceremoniously."

" You are very kind ; I am sure, grandpapa, and myself will have great pleasure—"

" Yes, certainly," chimed in the Colonel ; " though I seldom do so gay a thing, as to appear at a *soiree*."

" Then I shall expect you at half-past eight, as it is to be an early party, of a few friends only ; and now, Miss Vernon, read that note."

Kate opened it, and read as follows—

" DEAR MRS. STOREY,

" I should like to see the young person of whom your brother spoke to me, as I wish Mary and Angelina to begin music, without any further delay ; they have quite

forgotten what they learned at Mrs. Birch's. Can Miss Vernon teach singing? I shall be at home for her at one o'clock, on Tuesday next.

“With kind regards to Mr. S——,

“I am yours, very sincerely,

“A. POTTER.”

“*St. Cecilia Terrace,*

“*Brompton, Saturday evening.*”

“I am very glad to get a summons, at last,” said Kate, smiling. “I was beginning to fear pupils were an unattainable good. The note is from a friend of Mrs. Storey's, grandpapa,” she continued, anxious to prevent the old gentleman from reading it, as, she justly thought, the wording of it might ruffle his pride, “who requires instruction in music for her two daughters, and wishes me to call upon her on Tuesday. How do you go to Brompton from hence, Mrs. Storey?”

“The most agreeable way is through Kensington Gardens, then across the Knightsbridge Road.”

“Thank you ; that sounds as if it would be a pleasant walk.”

“Oh, very pleasant, indeed ; will you excuse me for running away very abruptly ? but I do not think I should have made time to call only for Mrs. Potter’s note ; another time, I hope we shall be able to improve our acquaintance, Miss Vernon. Good morning ; pray don’t come to the door. Half-past eight, Miss Vernon ; a few friends ; my brother brings some professors of music ;” and she chattered out of the room, overpowering Kate’s every effort to thank her for her kindness.

Nurse was in readiness to open the hall door, with a look of extreme displeasure on her countenance.

“I niver seen the like iv thim English,” she said, indignantly. “Hesther was washin’ the steps whin she come up—‘ Is Miss Vernon

at home?' ses she. 'Yes,' ses Hester; 'I'll call Mrs. O'Toole.' An' away she runs for me; but me lady couldn't wait, I suppose; so in she walks widout—'By yer lave, or with yer lave,' instead of waiting to be announced like a christian."

"No matter, nurse, she brought me good news," replied Kate.

"Well, my love, I congratulate you, that your pious wishes are likely to be accomplished," said the Colonel, as she returned to the room. "This Mrs. Storey appears to be a good sort of woman."

"Oh, I am delighted with her! and no wonder; she has rekindled the almost extinct flame of hope; I do trust I may succeed with her friend. Do come out, dearest grandpapa, I feel too glad to stay in the house."

The next day was Tuesday, and Kate, escorted by Mrs. O'Toole and Cormac, started at an early hour—to keep Mrs. Potter's appointment—as they had to explore their way—this

they accomplished without much difficulty ; and, leaving nurse and Cormac to wait her return, Kate followed a rather seedy manservant, in plain clothes, up a dingy stair-case, into a very handsomely-furnished, but uninhabited-looking drawing-room, with richly-bound books, geometrically placed on round tables, vases filled with wax flowers, alabaster Cupids, and a grand, rosewood piano. She had hardly glanced at all this finery, when the door was opened hastily, and a fat and rather red-faced woman, her hair done up into little round, flat curls, secured with pins, who breathed audibly, after mounting the stairs, came quickly into the room.

“Ah, I beg pardon,” she involuntarily exclaimed, as Kate’s slight, elegant figure met her eye ; “I understood Miss Vernon was here.”

“I am Miss Vernon,” replied Kate, quietly.

“Oh !” or, as she pronounced it, ‘ho,’ “indeed ! then will you just step down to the

front parlour? that stupid man did not know who you were."

"Indeed!"

The front parlour at No. —, St. Cecilia Terrace, was like all other front parlours of its class; there were horse-hair chairs and sofa, dyed moreen curtains, and the cast off furniture of humbler days, a former and less splendid house; no books, and a large work-basket; two young ladies that might be twelve and sixteen years of age, rose on their entrance; but did not long suspend the labours of their busy needles. There was a third person, whose semi-genteel dress, and hurried, anxious expression of face, and surrounding circle of shreds, of every hue and texture, declared her to be—"The very reasonable girl who goes out dress-making."

"Now, Miss Vernon," began Mrs. Potter, rapidly, almost before she was seated, "I want these two young ladies to be taught music. I understand you were a pupil of Herman's?"

“I was.”

“And can you teach singing?”

“Yes.”

“Well?”

“Why,” said Kate, “I cannot possibly be considered a fair judge.”

“Well, I should like some reference as to your capabilities.”

“I have none to offer, if you are not satisfied with Mr. Langley’s opinion.”

“Oh, yes; he is a very good judge.”

“Perhaps you will let me hear you play,” returned Mrs. Potter, sweeping off a mingled pile of silk merino and fringe, from a very antique piano.

“Of course,” replied Kate, drawing off her gloves.

“Ah!” she exclaimed, shrinking back at the discordant tones, which her first touch drew forth. “This is rather out of tune, and has not got the additional keys; I could not play anything on this instrument.”

“Well, there’s the grand up-stairs,” said Mrs. Potter, with more respect than her manner had yet testified, at this raising of difficulties on the part of Kate. “Come along, girls.”

They ascended to the decorated apartment before described ; and there, although she found the “grand rose-wood,” as it was termed by the family, to be deplorably out of tune also, Kate performed a noisy introduction and march, which she guessed would be most likely to suit her auditors ; a song was then demanded, and given ; and mother and daughters exchanged glances, which said very plainly—“We’ve drawn a prize !”

“Well, I’m sure that’s very nice,” began Mrs. Potter. “I have no objection to engage you.”

Then came the discussion of terms ; the greatest trial poor Kate had yet encountered. It was so difficult to name her price, so hard

to bear the attempt to beat her down ; yet all things must have an end ; and, at length, she was finally engaged. Then, with what a feeling of relief she walked briskly on to meet Mrs. O'Toole, who was loitering about in waiting for her young mistress.

“ How valuable poor Mr. Gilpin’s hints have been to me,” thought she ; “ what exquisite torture that whole interview would have been, had I not, by his advice, made up my mind to treat and think of the whole affair as a business transaction, which could not touch me really.”

Nurse was less curious than usual—the subject was one that could only give her pain and grief, so she contented herself with Kate’s general assurance that all was satisfactorily settled. The Colonel, notwithstanding all his consideration for his loving, self-forgetting child, could not suppress a groan, when he heard all the particulars she thought fit to give.

“Ah, dear Kate ! what costs us so dear, brings but little into our exchequer.”

“But I shall get more pupils, you know, and then—”

“Well, God’s will be done !”

The lessons at Brompton began the next day ; and Kate was surprised to find how rapidly the time flew in the endeavour to convey her own knowledge to her pupils ; then the walk back, accompanied by Cormac, who lay outside the hall door, like a chiselled effigy of watchfulness, all the time the lesson lasted, was charming. The welcome from nurse and grandpapa ! how grateful the task to work for them. “All I ask of Thee, oh Mighty Parent ! is abundance of work !” she often murmured, almost aloud.

Thus cheered, she wrote in a strain of un-wonted gaiety to Winter, promising him an account of Mrs. Storey’s *soirée*, at which nurse was determined her darling should appear in most *recherché* costume ; but, to her dismay,

the object of all this care, refused to appear in anything but “a demi-toilette.”

“An’ why won’t ye show yer illigant white neck, an’ arums, just to let them see what we’ve got in ould Ireland?”

“You see, it will be a small party, nurse; and, at all events, I would rather look too little, than too much, dressed; besides, it is of no consequence; yet, that is not quite true,” she added, with a frank smile, “I should not like to look frightful.”

So she had her own way, and wore the style of dress she preferred. Nurse produced a very handsome bouquet, just at the critical moment when the toilette was “*un fait accompli*,” and Kate was thinking how unfinished her costume looked without what had hitherto been, with her, an invariable accompaniment.

“Oh, nurse, how lovely! and you have got these for me! Ah, you spoil your child! but I am so glad to have them! Now I am indeed *mise à ravir*; and shall value them a thou-

sand times more as your gift, than if they were from—”

“ The Captin ?” put in Mrs. O’Toole, slyly.

“ Yes, far more,” said Kate, and she spoke the truth, for the moment.

Some slight delay in procuring a cab, rendered their appearance at Mrs. Storey’s later than they had intended, and her rooms were more than half full when they entered. There was the usual group of gentlemen near the door, conversing in under tones with each other ; there was the same spare sprinkling of broad cloth, amongst the silks, satins, and muslins, seated stiffly round the walls, or rigidly enthroned on ottomans ; the same half dozen of bolder spirits, more at home with the company than those about the door, amongst whom the *facetious man*, (for there is always such at third rate parties), shone conspicuous, entreating the ladies to teach him the language of flowers, or propounding far-fetched conun-

drums, ending, invariably, with, “ do you give it up ?”

Tea and coffee was being handed round by two most respectable-looking men, whose faces seemed strangely familiar to Kate, until she remembered that she saw them almost daily, at the gate of Kensington Gardens, mounting guard over the Bath chairs, which they had there for hire ; and young ladies were gently nibbling small squares of cake, and then depositing them in their saucers, as if ashamed of being guilty of so sublunary an occupation ; in short, there was every thing that could possibly be expected at a *soireé* of the class we are describing.

The appearance of Colonel Vernon, with his elegant-looking granddaughter, drew general attention ; and a whisper of curiosity ran round the room, as each one felt, instinctively, there was something in the newly arrived guests, different from themselves. Miss Vernon advanced through the numerous company, to her

total strangers, with the quiet self-possession which so peculiarly distinguished her, and which had struck Egerton so forcibly, at the memorable ball, where they had first met. It was so different from the assured manner of a veteran society hunter, or the "look at me," air of a professed beauty, and seemed to say, "there is no position so lofty, where I should be out of place."

Mrs. Storey welcomed her new acquaintance with great warmth, advancing rapidly to meet them, with a huge bouquet held fiercely in her hand like a Lancer charging the foe.

"Very glad to see you, Miss Vernon, and your grandpa, looking so well—Mr. Storey, Colonel Vernon, Miss Vernon, &c.

Mr. Storey was a rubicund, jolly looking man, not yet absolutely fat, but promising well for the time to come; slightly bald, with small twinkling eyes, and an inveterate affection for the letter R; moreover, he constantly held his hands in his trowsers' pockets'; laughed

often a fat laugh, had an unmistakeable air of prosperity, and was altogether what Mrs. Storey, called, "very good company."

"Happy to see you, Miss Vernon, happy to see you, sir; just a few friends, what my friend Jones calls a "tea fight," that's his interpretation of "*a soirée*."

Langley here disengaged himself, rather abruptly, from a group of two or three bold, confident-looking girls, and pale dishevelled men, evidently artistic, to greet the Vernons, very warmly for him.

"Let me get you a seat, Miss Vernon," said Mrs. Storey, drawing Kate towards the group Mr. Langley had just left. "Sorry I was out when you called yesterday. Did you arrange with Mrs. Potter?"

"Yes, and I have to thank you and Mr. Langley for procuring me my first pupils."

"Oh, I was very glad."

"Miss Dent," said Mrs. Storey to one of the dashing looking young ladies, before mentioned,

“let me introduce Miss Vernon, you are both very musical ; Miss Vernon plays beautifully, I am told ; we hope to hear her farther on in the evening—Miss Charlotte Dent.”

And Kate, to her dismay, was left to the tender mercies of these evidently “very fashionable,” girls, who were, “*en grande tenue*,” with the lowest cut dresses, and shortest sleeves permissible in society.

“ Been long in town ?” said the eldest, (after a deliberate survey of Miss Vernon’s simple costume,) in a bold and rather deep toned voice.

Kate replied courteously, and turned to see what had become of the Colonel ; he was engaged, apparently, in interesting conversation with Mr. Langley, and satisfied that he did not feel lonely, she gave her attention to the people round her.

“ Were you ever in town before ?” continued her examiner.

“ Oh, yes, for some time, three years ago.”

“ Horrid place at this time of year. I am counting the days until I start for Germany.”

Here one of Langley’s dishevelled friends, from some change in the surrounding group (for the rooms were now almost crowded), suddenly stepped back, and in so doing, trod on Miss Vernon’s dress ; he begged pardon with much empressement, in a manner which bespoke him to be no common man ; he was pale, thin and foreign-looking, with deep sunk, flashing eyes, wild hair, and an unsteady expression of countenance.

“ I am always doing these sort of things, and have vowed a hundred times never to brave the dangers of a *soirée* again ; but,” he shrugged his shoulders.

“ *Passato l’pericolo gabbato l’santo,*” said Kate, gaily and archly ; judging from his air and manner, that this scrap of poor Winter’s lore would be understood.

“ *La Signorina parla l’Italiano,*” he exclaimed, joyously.

“So little that I dare not venture to begin a conversation in it,” she replied, as she did not consider it impossible to speak to a stranger without a formal introduction.

“Yet you pronounce it correctly,” said the wild looking man.

“You think so?”

“Yes, and although it is not my native tongue, I love it, as if it were.”

“So did the friend from whom I learned what little I know of it, and the proverb I have just said; yet no; not quite so well as his own tongue, for *he* was English.”

“Your emphasis would imply that you think I am not, nor am I.”

“Mr. Winter used to say ——”

“Winter!” he interrupted, “is he the painter who has buried himself so strangely in some monastic tomb, some old city, “*en Province*?”

“The same.”

“Then you are the young lady Langley spoke of?”

“Yes.”

“*Maraviglia!*”

“Why are you surprised?” asked Kate, smiling.

He only repeated, “*maraviglia!*”

“Miss Dent, will you kindly play us something,” said Mrs. Storey, sailing up, bouquet in hand.

“With pleasure, Mrs. Storey, but really you must send for my music, for Mr. Jones has been making me laugh so, I could not remember a note if I was to die for it; it is in the cloak room.”

While Miss Dent was making numerous preparations for the proposed exhibition, Langley for the first time, left Vernon, and came over to Kate, who, feeling pleased to speak to her only acquaintance, at least of any standing, received him with a brilliant smile, making room for him beside her on the sofa, with her usual unpremeditated grace.

“I see my friend Galliard has made your acquaintance, Miss Vernon, without my assistance.”

“Ah, out of evil cometh good, thanks to Mademoiselle!” said the man he called Galliard, gaily. “Tore her dress, she pardoned the penitent, and permitted him to speak, *voilà tout*.

A warning hus-sh-sh silenced him, and taking a large pinch of snuff, he assumed a critical air as Miss Dent struck a powerful blow on an unfortunate chord, and started off at a brisk gallop up the keys ; her execution was really remarkable, and the music she performed full of physical difficulties ; there were interminable shakes, and thundering chords ; crossing of the hands and rushing from one extreme of the keys to the other ; at last the performance, amid a crash of chords, came to a sudden end, upon which the talkers, startled at hearing their own voices, all at once, so loud, stopped too, and clapped their hands.

Miss Dent rose with a triumphant air, gathered together her gloves, fan and bouquet, and stood at the end of the "instrument," as Mrs. Storey called it, laughing and talking noisily, with the numerous beaux who surrounded her.

"Now, Miss Vernon, may I call upon you?" said the lady of the house, approaching.

"Kate rose with a smile, and addressing Langley, in a low tone, said —

"Will you kindly stay with grandpapa, while I play, and do not let him come near me."

She took Mr. Storey's arm, as she spoke, and moved to the piano. Galliard and two or three more of Langley's friends followed, with every appearance of interest, very different from the degree of attention they bestowed on Miss Dent. Kate felt little or no nervousness; her trial and success, at Herman's, had set her mind at ease, and she at once began a very lovely Fantasia, composed by Gilpin, at her

request, and meant to convey the feeling of sweet peacefulness she had described to him, as often stealing over her heart, when, after the last notes of the evening service had scarce died away, she stood in the Priory church yard, where it overlooked the river, and saw its waters silvered by the moon-beams.

The music was of the Mendelssohn school, of which the organist was a great admirer, and Kate played it well ; she knew every note by heart, from the first solemn sustained chords, to the noble march and tender aria with which it concludes.

The talkers frequently begun, but were as frequently hushed by the indignant "chut, chut" of the connoisseurs ; and when she quietly rose from the piano, the emphatic "good, very good!" "she can play!" a remarkable composition!" testified the satisfaction of Langley's professional friends ; while

they left the task of noisy plaudits to the indiscriminating multitude.

Kate now in her turn, the centre of a little group, had to answer many questions as to the author of the music she had played, and, with her usual eagerness to exalt a friend, she pronounced a glowing eulogium on the organist as a man, and a musician.

“ He has genius, undoubtedly,” said Galliard, “ but can genius be satisfied with the obscurity of a little provincial town ?”

“ He is happy there,” said Kate.

“ Happy !” Galliard repeated, with a cynical accent.

“ A man must be very happy when he allows it,” replied Miss Vernon.

“ *E vero,*” cried Galliard, laughing.

“ Or so very proud that he will not admit the contrary,” suggested Langley.

“ If you knew Mr. Gilpin,” began Kate, when their hostess advancing, interrupted her,

and begged for a song, to which request Kate at once acceded.

Then the hostess proposed a quadrille, and introduced a young gentleman, redolent of *eau de mille fleurs*, with an elaborately worked shirt front, lined with pink, and a white pastry face, to Kate, whispering, in a jocose manner, “is quite a catch, junior partner in the great firm of Jones, Brown and Tuckett;” and, with a knowing nod, she walked away, leaving Kate half amused at the extraordinary confidences of her communicative hostess; but feeling through all that, had she still been heiress of Dungar, and any strange chance had thrown Mrs. Storey in her way, the acquaintanceship would have been conducted on very different terms.

She stood up very good-humouredly, however, and replied to all her partner’s vapid remarks, very readily; yet, somehow, Tuckett, junior, though he was “the glass of fashion and the mould of form,” to Hammond-court,

Mincing-lane, did not feel at his ease with her ; and she, in the innocence of her heart, believing that all firms dwelt in the city, and never dreaming that a man could be so silly as to blush because he was a worker instead of an idler, put him to torture by her unconscious questions.

“ I am anxious to explore the city,” she said, while the side couples were dancing *La Poule*. “ I suppose you know all its charming nooks by heart.”

“ Aw, no, indeed, it’s a place I have too great a distaste for, to stay in, except when obliged.”

“ For shame,” said Kate, “ A citizen of ‘ famous London Town,’ ought to know, and prize the various interesting ‘ locales’ in the mighty capital.”

“ Shall I get you an ice ?” said her partner, sullenly.

“ No, no, thank you,” replied Kate, shaking her head rather mournfully, as she remembered

the last time a similar question had been put to her ; and taking her seat near the Colonel, who was standing with Langley and Galliard ; she dismissed Tuckett, junior, with a gracious inclination of the head.

Soon after, the Colonel complaining of fatigue, and Kate, glad to escape her good-humoured host's frequently expressed wish that she would ' polkar,' took her leave of the *soirée*. Langley and Galliard attended them to the carriage, which awaited them.

" Mr. Langley tells me he saw our friend Egerton's name, in some paper, promoted to a majority," said the Colonel.

" Did he ! oh, where ?" cried Kate.

" It was in the *Gazette*, I took it up while waiting for Lord H— —, whose portrait I am painting."

" What did it say ?" asked Kate, folding her shawl round her.

" Oh,— ' The Honourable Frederic Egerton to be Major in the Lancers, without purchase,

vice,' some one, I forget the name, 'deceased.'"

"I dare say it cost him some hard cash, though it is there stated 'without purchase;' I understand all that. Come, Kate. Good night, Mr. Langley. *Bon soir, monsieur, au plaisir de vous voir,*" said the Colonel.

The Frenchman bowed profoundly, and they drove away.

The Colonel was not animated after this piece of gaiety, as he used to be in former days; it seemed to have depressed him, and he complained of slight cold. Mrs. O'Toole was woefully disappointed to find that there was "ne'er a lord, nor even an honourable, good or bad, at the party."

"To think iv yer playin' an' singin' for the likes iv thim!" she exclaimed, indignantly.

"What have I said to make you think so contemptuously of the very respectable people, amongst whom we have spent (I confess) 'a

rather slow evening,' as my eloquent partner would term it?"

" Och no matther, sure it's thim that's the only quolity goin' now ; well, niver mind, Miss Kate, we'll lave thim all yet."

" I hope so," sighed Kate.

CHAPTER VII.

LETTERS.

THE next morning, just as Kate was preparing to write a long letter to the Winters, one from the kind-hearted little artist was put into her hand. It was sealed with black wax, and announced the death of poor Gilpin. He had suffered a good deal; but, towards the last, fell into a calm, sweet sleep, out of which he suddenly awoke with a look of bright happiness, such as they had never seen on his face before, as if had heard a summons inaudible to their ears.

“ I come,” he said, and, feebly laying his

hand on Winter's, passed to "where his treasure was," without a sigh.

There was little in the letter besides the account of the good man's death ; he had left a memorandum of the persons amongst whom his books and music were to be distributed. He had desired, kindly messages, to one or two friends, and the last name he uttered was that of Kate Vernon.

She read the letter aloud, calmly, but the intonation of her voice indicated deep emotion ; at its conclusion there was a pause, which neither the Colonel nor his granddaughter were inclined to break ; both were hushed and awed by this description of their friend's passage to the World of Spirits.

The large, round, pearly tears weighed down Kate's long lashes, and slowly rolled over her cheeks, without any effort on her part to restrain them. She was unconscious that she wept.

At last the old man broke the silence, saying,

“ Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his !”

“ Amen,” replied his granddaughter. “ Oh, dearest grandpapa,” she continued at length, “ he has entered into his rest, and though it is an awful thought to us, that he still exists, but where no mortal eye can see him ; what an exchange from the many woes and struggles of his warfare here, to the boundless bliss of heaven ! He had many sorrows, and yet surely the coming shadow of a great deliverance rested on his spirit, long before he was freed ! How sensitive he was—about his appearance I mean—how keenly alive to every glance, and yet how resolutely he used to brace up his soul to love, and to endure !”

“ I suppose we shall soon hear from Winter again,” said the Colonel, after another pause.

“ I suppose so,” returned Kate, dreamily. “ Ah, nurse,” she exclaimed, a few moments after, as Mrs. O’Toole entered, about some

household matter, “he is gone—he is happy—our kind, gentle friend, Mr. Gilpin.”

“The heavens be his bed,” said Mrs. O’Toole, crossing herself. Och, whin was he taken, Miss Kate?”

“Two days ago.”

“Athin ’twas he was fit to go! faith, he was worth a score iv clargy to the poor ; an’, at the first goin’ to A—, I used to think it beneath ye, to be talkin’ an’ walkin’, wid a poor cra-thure iv an organist ; but I was proud to speake to him aftherwards meself ; for he always looked as if he’d a taste iv heaven inside iv him, so he did. Sure, it’s no wondher, this is such a miserable place to be in, wid sich min as Misther Gilpin an’ the masther, whipt off like —like a pooff, or robbed iv their own ; an’ sich chaps as Taaffe an’ Moore, or thim in their coaches, an’ desavin’ the world ! faith, it’s beyant me entirely, so it is.”

“And beyond many a wiser head than either

yours or mine, Nelly," said the Colonel, kindly.
" We must leave all that to God."

" Thru for ye, sir." And she retired, murmuring—" Och, blessed Jasus ! resave yer soul, mee poor Gilpin ! It's a saint on airth ye wur !"

So Kate's letter was written, in a very different strain from what she had intended ; and then she strolled with her grandfather in Kensington Gardens. The old man seemed feeble and depressed ; he took Kate's arm, as he often did of late, and spoke much of his own advancing years, and his anxiety, in the event of his death, for her in a tone that thrilled her heart with fear and anguish. She strove to turn the conversation—but it would not do.

" I have no doubt, that you alone would find a happy home under Georgina's roof ; but I wish I might see you happily married, and in a house of your own, before I am called away. I fear from Moore's intelligence, brief

and scanty as it is, there is no chance of our gaining this fatal lawsuit, so that you will be totally unprovided for ;" and he sighed deeply. " Our relations are so few, and—"

" Oh, hush, hush, dearest and best !" cried Kate ; " you cannot dream what pain you inflict on me, by such words ; do not fear for me ; I never know dread on my own account, for the future ; you do not know the strong courage of my heart—I did not know it myself till of late ; we cannot provide against future ills ; why then darken the present by anticipating them. Let us leave it all to God, as you told nurse this morning ; believe me, I fear nothing, except hearing you speak in this manner."

The old man was silent for a while, and then resumed—

" We little thought, the day Fred Egerton rushed back so gallantly to rescue our poor friend, how soon that pleasant little party would be scattered."

“ Little indeed,” echoed Kate ; “ next week it will be a year since the ball at Carrington, where I first met him.”

The Colonel smiled, and sighed.

“ He will be sorry to hear of poor Gilpin’s death. I wonder he has not written.”

“ Good morning, Miss Vernon,” said Langley, coming up behind them. “ I hope you caught no cold last night ? How do you do, Colonel Vernon ?”

The Colonel informed him of Gilpin’s death ; and he seemed rather interested, as the compositions of the organist, which Kate had played the night before, had pleased him greatly. Then they talked of great musicians, and Mozart’s Requiem, and the strange circumstances under which it is said to have been composed.

“ How much I love those wild, mysterious German stories, they have an indescribable charm for me,” said Kate.

“Why?” asked Langley, in his blunt manner.

“That is exactly what I cannot answer.”

“I never like what I do not understand.”

“How is it you are a painter then?” asked Kate, in her turn.

“I do not see what that has to do with the subject on which we were speaking,” he returned, startled at this attack.

“How is it that you can give expression to a face with your pencil, which you could not convey in words? Even a landscape may speak the painter’s soul, far more than the most eloquent description; so it is that glimpses of what is far beyond our nature to comprehend, faint though they be, give us an idea of space and might far more than any even perfectly comprehended explanation, as mist-wreaths hide but magnify the depths seen from a mountain.”

“A very poetical definition, Miss Vernon.”

“I speak but my thoughts,” said Kate, steadily, though she blushed, and felt uneasy; as enthusiasts always do, when the quick current of their imagination is checked by some son of earth, who dignifies his dulness by the name of strong common sense.

“Well, Miss Vernon, I must think of what you say about painting.”

“Ah, you must have enthusiasm and imagination to be a painter, though you are too English not to be ashamed of your better self.”

“That is what Galliard says.”

“Who is this Monsieur Galliard?” asked the Colonel.

“Oh, a very curious medley—his father was French, his mother English—and his life has been divided between France, Italy, and England—he is half a musician, half a painter, but wholly a writer for newspapers and reviews, foreign and domestic; he is well thought of, however, notwithstanding some vulnerable

points—knows lots of people, and is a very likely person to push you on well, Miss Vernon."

The Colonel winced at this conclusion.

"You are very kind," said Kate; "I quite begin to think you a real friend, now I am more accustomed to you."

Langley stared, astonished! Old enough to be Miss Vernon's father, it was extraordinary the influence this fair, bright, noble creature, whose every word and thought were so at variance with the maxims of his work-a-day world, was gaining over him.

Meanwhile, they had reached the Vernon's lodgings before he had recovered the fit of musing into which Kate's words had thrown him.

"I am glad you think me your friend," he said, at length, interrupting an exposition of the state of the *Ancienne Régime*, as it existed when he was in France, into which the Colonel had diverged, apropos to Galliard.

"I am quite sure you are 'no humbug,' as

my partner of last night would say," returned Kate, laughing.

And they parted.

Lady Desmond's letters were rather more frequent at this time, and though they evinced, as usual, warm affection and sincere interest in the fortunes of her relatives, there was a restlessness and despondency in their tone which spoke of a spirit ill at ease. She frequently said she would return to them, as they would not come to her; but months flew by, and still she was among the "distinguished English at present in Florence." And Kate, who, in spite of herself, yearned for her return, as for the first beam of the rising sun, as something that would create a change for the better in the face of affairs, and also longed to see the fair face of a much loved relative, felt that the only reason why she did not quite despair of seeing Lady Desmond's promises fulfilled, was because she dared not deprive herself of that hope. The Colonel, too, clung to it, with an

eagerness almost painful, at times ; and it was evident, this feverish anxiety was connected with some intention of putting Kate under her guardianship.

And so their life rolled on—the only break in its monotony was a slight difference between Mrs. Crooks, the landlady, and Mrs. O'Toole, which arose from their mutual affection for the parrot. Nurse asserted “it was a mighty knowledgeable craythur iv a bird ;” and Poll verified the statement of her admirer, by repeating various phrases she learnt from Mrs. O'Toole, in a rich County Clare brogue. The poverty of the kitchen fire was a constant source of vexation to Mrs. O'Toole.

“ Hesther, och ! girl alive—will ye rouse up that fire a bit,” was her constant cry ; and Poll never beheld the much enduring hand-maid of Mrs. Crooks, without screaming. “ Hesther, Hesther, rouse up the fire a bit.” “ Hesther ye devil !” “ Ah, speak pretty, Poll,” Mr. Crooks would then exclaim, “ don’t

say such ugly words—say dear mistress.” “Ye devil,” Poll would reply.

“ Faith it would make ye break yer heart laughing, sir,” said nurse, who was detailing the events of their warfare, to the Colonel and Kate, one evening. ‘ Spake pretty,’ ses she, ‘ an don’t be hollowin’ out thim vulgar Hirish words,’ ses she. ‘ Och, God help ye woman,’ ses I, ‘ it’s little ye know the differ between what’s vulgar, an what’s genteel in this counthry,’ ses I. ‘ Ye’d lave a poor Queen, to go sarve a rich tinker, any hour of the twenty-four; an ye’d rummage through the blackest dirt iv London for a halfpenny, though yer pocket was full iv goold guineas, all the time —that’s yer gintility in England,’ sis I; ‘ an as for style, an rale quolity, faith it’s so little—”

“ Dear nurse,” interrupted Kate, gravely, “ I wish you had not made such a long and irritating speech, to Mrs. Crooks; you must let me settle your differences, and in future

turn a deaf ear to any casual remarks that may hurt your national vanity—they are not worth noticing."

"Och, my gracious, Miss Kate, is an im-pudent thief iv a lodging-house keeper, to be let to have her talk about her betthers an—be the powers ! there's the post," cried nurse interrupting herself, "an I dhreamt, I had a letther from—" she ran out hastily, and returned almost immediately, with a disappointed look, "It's for the masther."

"From Winter," said he, opening it. An enclosed letter, with the Indian post-mark fell from it. "From Egerton, I do believe," cried the Colonel; but no—within that again was another enclosure, the address, written in an intoxicated looking hand, and much blotted. "For Mrs. O'Toole, at the Kurnel's in England."

"It's for you, nurse," said Kate, with a heavy sensation of deep disappointment weighing down her heart.

KATE VERNON.

“ I’ll engage it’s from Dinny ; athin read it for me, jewil !”

So Kate, disengaging its folds from the stiff adhesion of a large red wafer, and taking the liberty of correcting some very prominent errors of orthography, and transferring small into capital I’s, read as follows :—

“ Deer mother, I’m quite well, an’ it’s little I thought I’d ever get a lettther sent to ye ; bud this is the way iv it ; last April the new Captin, iv throop, No. 1, kem into Can-toonments, an’ he half dead—havin’ been kilt be robbers, an’ murthered entirely be the saver. Well this was the beginnin’ iv luck, fur ye see, what with the hate iv the climat’, an’ the druth an’ me, I was gettin’ accustomed to punishmint drill an’ the like, an’ to speake God’s thruth, I was’nt sober over wanct in a week—though many’s the sore heart I had about that same, thinkin’ iv you mother, an’ the green glens iv Dungar, an’ father O’Dris-

coll, bud ye see I'd got a bad name, an' it was no use."

"Och ! God help ye—ye onfortunate boy—many's the sowl that same, 'bad name,' has ruined," ejaculated Mrs. O'Toole. "Go on, asthore."

"Captin Egerton comes on parade—lookin' like a ghost iv a fine man, an' sittin' his horse illegant—and ses he, afther prade, ridin' up, jist as we wor dispersin'—'Is there a man among ye's, me lads, iv the name iv Dennis O'Toole ?'" ses he, quite cheerful like. 'Yes, sir,' ses Sargent Mills—'he's in throop, No. 3.' 'Let me see him,' ses the Captin?.' 'Dennis O'Toole, if yer sober, stand out,' ses the Sarjant.' 'Ha !' ses the Captin, quite quick like—'that's bad.' An' I niver felt so ashamed iv meself afore nor since ; wid that he tells me to come up to his quarthers in the afthernoon. So I wint—an' he give me yer letter, that Miss Kate wrote for ye, God bless her ! an' sure me hart was in me mouth, whin

I got the word iv home ; bud faith it 'ud take a month's time to write all the good he done me—he discoarsed me like—no not like a clargy —like a man. ‘Don’t let the dhrink get the betther of ye,’ ses he ; ‘fight it, as ye would a rascally Sikh—give it no quarther ; an’ don’t let the people at home, say ye showed the white feather,’ ses he ; an’ thin he walks up an ’down, an’ ses to hisself—‘ I will not have Kate Vernon’s foster brother a dhrunkard, an’ disgraced’—I hard him say it. Well, the ind iv it was, I was put in his throop, No. 1, an’ iv taken the pledge ; that’s to the Captin ; an’ I’ll be a corplar in a week or so ; an’ I’m as sober as a jidge, barin’ the pipe—an’ it’s many a ride we do be takin—the Captin an’ meself. He’s not a bit like the other officers ; but, always reading, whin he is’nt shootin’ tigers or pullin’ unfortunate women out iv the fire, or any divilment that way. Iv all the dashin’ young min iver I seen, I’ll back the Captin—there’s nothin’ good, bad, nor indifferent he would’nt

face—jist as if he was goin' to his dinner ; an' many a time we do be talkin' iv you, an' how ye nursed him ; and he's niver tired of hearin' tell iv Miss Kate, whin she was a beautiful little darlin' iv a child ; an' iv Dungar an' the masther ; an' I'm improvin' me writin'—an' Corplar Morrisson's writin' this letther for me like a rale pinman as he is ; an' so I hope yer well—an he ses he's a trifle iv money with the Captin ; an' indeed Mrs. O'Toole yer son's another man, intirely, an' I'm proud to tell ye that same ; an' me duty to Miss Kate, an' the Kurnel. Sure, I never can forget Dungar, an' ould times, nor you, mother ; an' if we are not to meet here again, I hope we may in Heaven, amin !

“ Your dutiful an' lovin' son,

“ DINNIS O'TOOLE.

“ Throop, No. 1, an' own man to the

“ Captin.

“ *Cartoonment.*

“ *Junglepore, Ingry.*”

“ The Queen in Heaven reward ye, Captin,” cried Mrs. O’Toole, the tears rolling down her cheeks. “ Och, Dinny, it’s you’s in luck—an’ he’s the Captin’s own man ; an’ give up dhrink —glory be to God !”

“ Well, it’s a very pleasing, satisfactory letter, Nelly,” said the Colonel, “ and I am heartily glad to hear so good an account from your son. Eh, Kate, is there a postscript ?”

“ No ; but I was reading over the concluding part—it is rather confused—Corporal Morisson, appears to write for Dennis in the third person, and then Dennis himself comes in again, in the first person ; but, dear nurse, I congratulate you, with all my heart, I think my foster-brother will now get on remarkably well.”

“ Sorra fear iv him now. Sure there was always luck in the Captin’s face, an’ he’ll be back yet wid a pocket full iv goold, and set us all right, I pray, God, amin. Now I’ll just get the specks, an’ read it all over meself, sure

I can make it out beautiful afther Miss Kate readin' it."

And so after a few more ejaculations, nurse retired.

"It is very curious," began the Colonel.

"That Captain Egerton did not write himself," interrupted Kate, quickly.

"Yes, I cannot understand it, that letter indicates the kindest feelings towards us, and yet I wonder he would not wish for some more direct communication with us, than through Dennis O'Toole."

"Do letters ever go astray?"

"Oh, scarcely ; this one you see has arrived safe, but what surprises me is that he enclosed it without a line."

"Indolence about writing, I suppose," said Kate, with a sigh.

"But now I have the address, I shall certainly write."

"Will you, dear grandpapa?"

"Well, perhaps it would be better, decidedly

—let me see what days the Indian mail leaves, we can find it out at the post-office ; you must remind me, my love."

" Yes, grandpapa."

Then she went to the piano, and played dreamily for a long time, seeing neither notes or music, but a tableau—Dennis O'Toole and Captain Egerton, while the words of the latter " I will not have Kate Vernon's foster brother, a drunkard," seemed to meet her eye, wherever she turned it, and brought the speaker too vividly before her. One of Egerton's most distinguishing characteristics was a chivalrous delicacy of feeling towards women, generally ; Kate had often observed it, with silent, but profound approbation, and she could well imagine the tender consideration with which he would treat even a dog that had belonged to one he loved, and something whispered to her that she was this one—it was but very rarely that such a thought flashed across her mind. Yet although she felt that the course of proba-

bilities held out little or no chance of their again meeting till the lapse of many years had fixed their destinies wide apart, still the conviction that she was loved and not forgotten, thrilled through her heart, with an ecstasy so exquisite, so strange that she shrunk from it, startled at the depths of her own nature, thus revealed, even while she thanked God that he had never become necessary to her happiness.

“No, there is much of joy in life for me, and much of peace, though, in all human probability, we shall never meet again. No, I do not love him, but I could, ah, heavens, yes, how much !”

And she lay down to sleep perfectly resigned that their lots in life should be cast widely separate; yet the vision conjured up by Denny’s letter, of Egerton’s evidently unaltered interest in all that concerned her, contributed largely to the dilation of heart with which she poured forth her prayers and thanksgivings to her “Father which is in heaven.”

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ADVENTURE AND A SURPRISE.

AUTUMN was now rapidly merging into winter, the unbroken routine of Kate's life only lent swifter wings to time, for events like marked distances serve often but to show our tardy progress. Sometimes Langley would look in for half an hour's chat, and Galliard still more rarely; but though formerly so fond of society, their visits seemed now more than the Colonel wished for, or was equal to; and although she never permitted the dreadful thought to dwell on her mind, yet the consciousness that he was unusually silent, and

averse to move, that his cheek had lost its firm, round, ruddy look ; and that he often sent his dinner away untouched, would seize her, with a sense of anguish. Nurse, with love's quick perception, always stoutly denied that any thing ailed him.

“It 'ill do nayther iv thim any good to be thinkin that a way,” she would say to herself. “Miss Kate the crayther, has enough to put up with, an' as to me poor darlin' masther, it 'ud take a better cordial than iver kem out iv a 'poticary's shop to do him any good.”

These apprehensions about her grandfather were weighing heavily on Kate's heart. One humid, gloomy afternoon she was returning home after giving some music lessons, escorted, as usual, by her faithful Cormac ; as she hurriedly crossed the road, (for it was late), at Kensington Gore, to enter the gardens by the gate near the ancient and diminutive barrack, usually occupied by a small party of Light Dragoons, two gentlemen stopped opposite to

it. One a large, heavy, man, mounted on a splendid, dark chesnut horse, whose broad chest and clean, strong muscular limbs showed him to be a weight carrier ; the rider's back was to the gardens, and his eyes fell on Kate and her companion, as she came up ; the other, about middle height, slight, distinguished looking, but simply dressed, stood on the footway leaning his right arm on the neck of his friend's horse, and occasionally waving his left hand as if to enforce his words ; the peculiar turn of this last described individual's head, and the careless arrangement of his wavy hair reminded Kate of Egerton, or rather stamped him as belonging to Egerton's class ; for one of the indications of gentlemanlike appearance is the turn of the head and the manner of wearing the hat.

“ By George ! what a splendid dog ! ” exclaimed the equestrian, interrupting his companion, who turning slowly round, caught a glimpse of Kate, as she passed ; her color

heightened by her rapid walk, and Cormac, as usual, keeping close to her side. A new keeper was standing at the gate, as she was about to enter, and said, civilly, though authoritatively—

“No dogs admitted, ma’am.”

“But he always accompanies me,” said Kate, “and never frightens any one, not even the birds, the last keeper never objected to his coming through.”

“But my orders are strict; and he is such a large dog.”

“Well, I really cannot go back again,” continued Miss Vernon, smiling, and shaking her head. “I saw a lady go in just before me, with a dog.”

“Yes, but she had a string to him.”

“Oh, I can soon manage that,” cried Kate, fastening one end of her handkerchief to Cormac’s collar. “Now may I go through?”

The man smiled, and made way for her.

While stooping, to fasten the handkerchief,

the gentleman we have above described, as leaning across the neck of his friend's horse, walked past, glancing at Kate, quickly and keenly ; she did not observe him, but turning up the broad walk proceeded towards home, lost in a wandering maze of sweet and bitter thought. As she approached the water near the Palace, she paused a moment to notice a peripatetic duck of large dimensions, and brilliant plumage, for whom she generally carried a bit of bread or biscuit, and who made long marches in quest of dainties, that might possibly be missed by adhering closely to his more natural element. Cormac sat down gravely, while his mistress addressed a few words of apology to her feathered pensioner.

“ No bread or biscuit to-day, poor duck, but I will not forget you to-morrow.”

And she stood looking at the creature, as it waddled awkwardly round and round her, quite regardless of the dog. At that moment the gentleman before mentioned came up beside her,

and slightly raising his hat, said, politely and easily—

“ How is it that you are alone ? ”

Kate turned quickly, and met a piercing gaze from a pair of deep set, but stern looking black eyes. She was naturally courageous, and the idea of any one intentionally insulting her never occurred to her mind ; the stranger’s tone too, was perfectly well-bred, and his words, such as might be addressed to some familiar acquaintance ; so, without hesitation, or the slightest apprehension or embarrassment, and meeting his bold glance steadily, she replied, calmly, with a slight inclination of the head—

“ You mistake me, I do not know you,” and moved on towards home. To her surprise, however, the stranger kept by her side, and after a moment’s silence, apparently somewhat surprised at her composure, he resumed, softening still more a very musical and refined voice—

“ You are both right and wrong ; I do not mistake you for any other person, but I am unfortunately unacquainted with you, and unless I take a bold step, such as I have now done, may remain so ; therefore, pray forgive me.”

Kate walked on in silence, her heart throbbing with indignation ; to be addressed by a stranger, and one too, apparently, of her own rank in life ; one whom, under different circumstances, would, perhaps, have been presented by some smiling or dignified hostess. These thoughts flashed like lightning through her brain, and left no room for fear, as she kept a resolute silence. After another short pause, the stranger again turning his cold, sallow, but intellectual countenance towards hers resumed—

“ It is absurd your persevering in this unbroken silence ; I generally carry out my resolves ; and to exchange a few sentences with a person not formally introduced to you, cannot

possibly be an injury ; speak, I entreat you, give me but the slightest clue to your name and position, and I will speedily contrive the necessary introduction—will not that satisfy you ?" he added, in a slightly sarcastic tone, and suddenly placing himself in her way : she stopped, and keeping still silent, for a moment more, to collect her thoughts, and get the fiery indignation that swelled her heart under controul.

" Sir," said she, deliberately, and with a determination of tone and manner that surprised him, " unless your appearance sadly belies you, you should be too much a gentleman not to feel by instinct that I am a lady ; your excuses for your presumptuous insolence only adds to it, but," she continued, with a curl of the lip, and a flash of indignant contempt from her dark grey eyes, that deepened them to blue, " I laugh at your attempt to stop me ! Here, Cormac," to the hound, who had already uttered one or two ominous growls,

she untied the handkerchief ; “ watch him, good dog, and if he stirs—” she stopped, and looking once more full in the stranger’s face, turned suddenly, so as to place the hound between them, and walked lightly away, yet not too fast. The stranger, thus left planted, bit his lip, then laughing slightly, attempted to pass the dog, who, in heraldic attitude ‘ couchant,’ kept his fierce eyes fixed on his charge, at whose slightest movement he displayed his sharp, white fangs.

“ Pshaw ! what a mistake, to address such a girl, *sans ceremonie* ; what an awkward predicament ! It would be absurd to enter into a contest with such a brute, unarmed, for nothing,” muttered Kate’s admirer, who did not look like a man deficient in courage. “ Here, good dog, I say,” and he again attempted to pass, but Cormac sprang to his feet with a savage growl, and again the haughty looking ‘ elegant’ was baffled.

Meantime Kate’s slight figure disappeared

in the distance, and, a moment after, Cormac pricking his ears at some sound, unheard by his opponent, with a final growl, darted at full speed down the walk by which his mistress had vanished. She was waiting a few paces beyond the gate, where she had, to the best of her ability, uttered the whistle, which had recalled her faithful guardian ; and now hurrying her pace almost to a run, they speedily reached home, but not before the persevering stranger had caught sight of the flutter of her dress, as she turned the corner of Victoria Gardens.

“ How late you are, my child ! you seem flushed and breathless.”

“ Yes, dear grandpapa, I was detained at Mrs. Potter’s, and of course that made me late with my other pupils ; then I walked so fast ; but I will run up stairs and take off my bonnet.”

“ Oh, nurse !” she exclaimed, throwing herself into Mrs. O’Toole’s arms, “ I have had

such a fright—no, not a fright, but I am so indignant to think that he should dare to—”

“ Och, what is it, good or bad ? take breath, asthore !”

And Kate, with many charges not to tell her grandfather, recounted her adventure to nurse.

“ Och, bad manners to him,” exclaimed that sympathising confidante. “ The rale devil he was to go spake that away to a lady like you ; bad luck to his impudence ; did he think ye’d thank him for wantin’ to know ye ? I wish I come across him, faith I’d make his hair stand on ind, the schamin’ vagabone. But why are ye cryin’, avick, about a thief iv a pickpocket ? I’ll go bail it’s yer purse he wanted ; sure a rale gintleman ud know betther !”

“ I can’t help it, nurse ! they are the bitterest tears I ever shed, not on account of that wretched man, but to think that such a thing ever occurred, and may occur again.”

“ Sorra bit iv it, I’ll go wid ye me own self ivery day to Potter’s an’ the other place, an’

let me see if me gintleman dare say pays to ye ! Whist ! och, jewel, there's the masther callin—dhry yer eyes."

For several days the faithful Nelly escorted her young mistress in her walks, but the adventurous stranger never appeared ; and, by degrees, Kate began to look upon her fright and indignation as an unpleasant but unreal phantom.

One evening Kate had yielded to the entreaties of Mrs. Storey and her juvenile olive branches, to join a birth-day merry-making, in honor of the son and heir having attained his eighth year ; and for once she left her grandfather to read alone. Nurse, of course, guarded her during her short transit between their abode and that of her host's, and having carefully removed her nursling's shawl and bonnet, plodded slowly homeward, to make the ' masther's tay,' for the birth-day fêté began at half-past six ; thinking sadly enough of the past,

and of her dear master's sinking strength and spirits, she turned into the little street or terrace in which they lived.

"Pray," said a very languid, gentleman-like voice, close beside her. "Pray, do you not live at No. — down here?"

"May be I do, may be I don't," replied Mrs. O'Toole, eyeing the speaker sharply, and with, what she considered, consummate caution.

"Well," returned her interrogator, whom, it is needless to say, was the same individual whose insolence had so annoyed Kate, and whose really elegant appearance would have enlisted her in his favour, but for her prepossessions against him; "I presume you know your own residence; at all events I shall feel obliged to you if you will let me know the name of the young lady, whom you sometimes escort through Kensington Gardens? Of course, as the utterance of it will cause considerable wear and tear of your lungs, accept this remuneration."

“ What is it ye want with her name ? ” asked Mrs. O’Toole.

“ That cannot possibly concern you ; tell it to me, and take this.”

“ Keep yer money,” replied Mrs. O’Toole, with supreme disdain, “ divil another word, good nor bad, will ye get from me, till ye tell me what ye want her name for.”

“ Ah,” said the gentleman, musingly, “ you seem so respectable a person, I have no objection to tell you, that having unfortunately offended the lady, by speaking to her in the Gardens, I am anxious this apology should reach her hand,” and he showed a note he held, “ will you be the bearer of it ? ” he continued, insinuatingly.

“ I’ll tell ye what it is,” returned nurse, firing up in spite of her determination to be cool and cautious, “ I’ll bear nayther yer notes nor yer impidince ; I’d like to see the man, woman, or child that daur be carryin’ notes for ye to Miss— No matther,” she continued,

hastily checking herself, “ it’s not the likes iv ye, an oudacious chap, that daured to spake to yer betthers, widout, ‘ by yer lave or wid yer lave,’ she’d so much as look at. Faith, if I see a sign iv ye about the place, to frighten me darlint, I’ll just give ye up to the polis ; I’ll go bail it’s the spoons ye’re more used to be lookin’ afther than the ladies, though ye have a good coat on yer back, an’ look as if it wasn’t a stranger to ye.”

“ My good woman,” said the object of this tirade, with a half-surprised, half-amused air, as Mrs O’Toole paused for breath, “ You are the most impracticable person I ever met ; I do not understand you.”

“ Well then, I’ll spake plain enough for ye. If ye were a gintleman, ye’d niver have gone to spake to me darlin’ young lady, in the way ye did, the other day—ye’d have known yer own sort, an’ the differ betune a bit iv a dress-maker, and a raale lady ; an’ ye may look as fine, an’ as proud as ye like, but I’ll see ye

yet, gettin' up stairs to the tune of Turn the Mill—so good-by te ye, an' ye may put yer note in the fire ; but if I see ye about here, be this book,” kissing her hand, “ I'll give ye up to the polis, for a suspicious *characther*, that has his eye on the plate !” And off walked Mrs. O'Toole, glowing with triumph and honest indignation.

The stranger muttered something very like a curse ; then, laughing slightly, he said, half aloud, as if in the habit of speaking his thoughts—

“ The most extraordinary specimen of indignant virtue I ever encountered—why, she is as incorruptible as the hound, and just as fierce. So adieu, *ma belle*,” tearing the note. “ A Houri would not be worth the trouble such guardianship entails ; besides the ridicule of appearing to the charges her eloquent duenna threatens.” He thought a moment, turned, and walked slowly back to the main road, where a plainly appointed cab, with a horse of

great beauty and value, and an irreproachable tiger awaited him.

Kate thought nurse's movements unusually rapid, as they returned from Mrs. Storey's, but that considerate personage said not a syllable of her interview with the unknown, until that most confidential moment, when the stiffness of drawing-room manner and costume is exchanged for a *robe de chambre*, and Kate's long rich, brown tresses were submitted to Mrs. O'Toole, and the brush.

“Sure, that dark browed divil was spyin' about whin I kem back fum Storey's.”

“What that dreadful man? who spoke?”

“Yes, agra, an', Miss Kate, fur all I tould him, I thought him a pick-pocket—faith, I believe he's a gran' gintleman; I know be the look iv him; see now, if he is'nt a lord, I never seen one, an' they were as thick as parsley at Dungar. I was frightened to have the likes iv him ramblin' about here, so I jist spoke up bould, an' pretended to think he was

a pick-pocket or the like, an' threatened him wid the polis, an' I think I settled him any how."

"I have no doubt you acted quite right, dearest nurse, and I should like to have heard you giving him "his tag," as you would term it; but surely he will never take the trouble to come here again. I thought it was only a passing impertinence—perhaps he was really sorry, and wished to apologise—let us give him "the benefit of a doubt;" and so they dismissed the subject, which slumbered for many months before—but we must not anticipate.

Not many days after this break in the routine of their lives, as Kate and the Colonel were one evening talking by the fire-light, of A——, and the Winters—the sound of approaching wheels, broke the stillness, which generally settled over Victoria-gardens, at the close of day. The sound drew nearer, and suddenly ceased at their house.

“Some mistake,” said Miss Vernon, as both she and her grandfather paused in their conversation, to listen to that vague watchfulness, so often felt by those whose hearts are full of the future, because the present is sad; then the garden-gate creaked on its hinges, and heavy steps approached rapidly, the bell was rung loudly, and though she could not tell why, Kate’s heart beat more quickly, as she listened for the next sounds, for each movement, is clearly audible through the slight walls of a modern built house in the outlets of London. The door was opened, and a husky whispering ensued, to which the servant’s voice replied—“Yes, Mr. Vernon’s at home;” and in another moment Mrs. O’Toole’s hearty tones were heard in joyous welcome.

“Athen, is it yerself that’s in it? Masha, but it’s the masther, an’ Miss Kate, will be proud to see ye. Walk in, ma’am—I’ll settle the cabman.” Then the parlour-door was thrown wide open, and in walked Mrs. Winter,

in a large, plaid cloak—followed by a mass of coats and comforters, over which twinkled joyously, the artist's little bead-like eyes.

Then came the joyous confusion of question and answer, and wonder and welcome; and Kate felt a sudden accession of life and strength.

“But to what do we owe this happy surprise?” she reiterated, as she knelt at Mrs. Winter's feet, to change her boots, for a pair of warm slippers.

“Indeed, my dear, it is one of Winter's fits; he would not let me write, nor write himself—he said we might disappoint you, and ourselves.”

“Yes,” broke in Winter, disencumbering himself of his numerous wrappings, “I knew you—you would have been killing the fatted calf, and roasting turkeys, and all sorts of things; and we should have been late, and teased you with expectation, so I said, leave

your pen alone, Sue, and here we are ; stopped at the first house with “furnished apartments,” on it, engaged them—then all right, ready for a dish of tea, and chat ; and then turn in—close here—Albert-place. Why, Colonel, you do not look as if London agreed with you, but you *bella mia*, you look quite yourself.”

“But what has induced you to visit the great Babylon ?” said the Colonel, when the first hubbub of welcome was over, and they were assembled round the tea-table.

“We are going on the continent,” said Mrs. Winter, with some importance.

“Is it possible ?” cried Kate.

“You do not speak seriously ?” said the Colonel.

“Why not ? I’ve got a cold, and I’ve no idea of remaining to be cut off, like poor Gilpin, by the east winds,” returned Winter.

“Is that your only reason ?” asked Kate.

“Why not exactly ; but A—— has become such a desert, now that you and Gilpin are gone ; life is not worth having there.”

“I do not like the idea of having the sea between us,” said the Colonel.

“Nor I,” added his grand-daughter.

“Nor I ; but we will not be long away, and I intend to paint, while abroad, such a picture, as will make the Royal Academicians die of envy,” said Winter.

“And,” added Mrs. Winter, “we have let our house very advantageously to a cousin of Canon Jones’s, who commands the new regiment.”

“But you will not run away too soon ?” asked Kate.

“No, we shall remain three or four weeks in London.”

“I am rejoiced to hear it,” said the Colonel.

“Oh, delightful,” cried Kate.

“We will talk over our plans to-morrow,”

said Winter, to-night, let us hear of your own proceedings. How do you like my friend Langley?"

"Oh, I like him very much," returned Kate, "I am sure there is much good in him, though he wont show it, and seems so cold and cautious even with himsslf, that I dare not take it upon myself to say he will be glad to see even you."

"Well, I can tell you he writes enthusiastically of you," replied Winter.

"*Non e possibile!*"

And so the conversation flowed on in a thousand interrogative channels, all indicative of the same warm and friendly interest, which, still unabated, linked the *quartette*. Oh, how much more closely than the ties of blood.

Winter, in obedience to a warning glance from Kate, reserved his questionings, as to her success in teaching, for a *tête-à-tête*, and his good little wife followed his example on this, as on all other subjects. The poor organist's

deathbed was re-described, and the “grand following,” as Mrs. O’Toole would term it, that graced his funeral, discussed, and, in spite of the, to them, unaccustomed fatigue of a journey, the interchange of intelligence was prolonged to a late hour for travellers, and when they parted for the night, Kate felt her own hopeful joyous self again; to think that such true and tried friends were near, that she should meet them in the morning, and once more be able to pour out the fears and anxieties which no want of confidence in her grandfather, but a tenderness of affection too considerate to grieve him, kept pent up within her own bosom, till their weight oppressed her. Once more she would take counsel of that clear, strong, warm-heart, which no self-interest, no conventional falsity clouded or obscured. “And though their stay is but short,” was her concluding thought, as sleep closed her snowy lids, with its downy weight, “thank God they *are* come, I will enjoy their presence, and

not think of the sorrow of parting, until it comes."

But a young spirit must be somewhat initiated in grief, before it can attain this philosophy, if it ever can be attained, for however the heart may purpose to enjoy the present, and disregard the future, there is still something of omnipresence in its nature, that gives an actuality to anticipated joy or sorrow, it cannot wile away.

The period of the Winters' stay in London was one of great enjoyment to Kate, for though what is termed the dead season, there were quite enough of pictures to be seen and concerts to be heard to employ the mornings, and sometimes the evenings, most agreeably, and until their arrival, Kate had seen nothing of the Great Metropolis.

It seemed as if the advent of the warm-hearted, practical little artist had broken the sad depressing spell which had been gathering closer and closer round her spirit since she had

left A——. Winter was a stout and active pedestrian, and leaning on his arm, Kate bade defiance to the most persevering and mysterious stranger that ever crossed heroine's path. The Colonel too was wonderfully revived by the presence of his kind and valued friends, and, strange to say, even Cormac, who when left at A—— was too savage to be approached by his temporary keeper, was most sociable and condescending with him in London.

One morning, Mr. Langley called, and after sitting in a sort of preoccupied silence for some time, with some hesitation and much awkwardness, suggested that he wished to invite his friend Winter and his wife to dinner, and as the Colonel and Miss Vernon were so fond of their society, perhaps they would consent to encounter the discomfort of a bachelor's *ménage* and meet them.

The Colonel and Kate assented most graciously, and the party, reinforced by Galliard and

Mr. and Mrs. Story, met the next day at what Winter termed "grub hour."

Contrary to her expectations Kate spent a most agreeable day; Langley, like many shy persons, shone in his own house, Winter was most amusingly argumentative, Galliard witty, and the Colonel cheerful and urbane as usual; while Mrs. Storey's repeated apologies for the irregularities of a bachelor's *ménage*, and Mr. Winter's reiterated assurances that every thing was in admirable order, kept up an under current of polite common-place, that amused Kate exceedingly, by its contrast to the prevailing tone of the conversation.

"You have visited the British Museum?" enquired Galliard.

"Only, once," said Kate, "and that hurriedly, I long to go again."

"There is a great lot of trash there," observed Winter.

"What treason," returned Galliard, "it has all cost money, and John Bull is content."

“Of course,” said Langley, “you will have your sneer at John Bull.”

“Why not? I am, you know, half English.”

“Come, Mr. Langley,” said Kate, “the English you will admit, are not very sparing of their neighbours.”

“They do not make much allowance for any peculiarities, except their own, certainly,” remarked Colonel Vernon.

“You are in such a decided minority, you Celts, you had better hold your tongues,” cried Winter.

“But what is it you call trash, at the British Museum?” asked Kate.

“Oh, the mummies, and the wigs, and all that; such an *embarras* of mummies can hardly be conceived!” said Winter.

“I wish we could bring the Gheber mode of disposing of the dead into fashion again; I shall certainly leave a clause in my will that my body shall be burned,” observed Galliard.

“Law, Mr. Galliard, what an idea,” said Mrs. Storey.

“Why not? my dear madam.”

“I always liked Zoroaster and the fire worshippers,” said Kate, “their system appears to me the least degrading of all ancient religions.”

“Humph! Miss Vernon used to insist that the round towers of Ireland were built by the Western Ghebers,” remarked Winter.

“It is quite possible!” responded Galliard.

“Any thing so far beyond our historical period may be possible,” observed Langley.

“Ah,” said Galliard, “you consider them anterior to the Celtic invasions, Miss Vernon?”

“The author, whose writings on the subject I have read, thought so,” replied Kate.

“Galliard’s strong point is Celtic antiquity,” said their host.

“It is a subject full of profound and melancholy interest,” he replied.

“ Why melancholy ?” asked Winter.

“ Because,” rejoined Galliard, “ of the contrast between their past and present.”

“ The strongest proof they were an inferior race,” said Langley, “ otherwise they would not have given way so rapidly before the Saxons.”

“ A thoroughly English observation,” cried Galliard. “ You are poor and powerless, therefore you deserve to be so.”

“ That’s not a fair commentary,” said Langley.

“ There are two causes, which, to a reflective mind, sufficiently explain, the deterioration of the Celtic race, morally and physically,” observed Galliard, thoughtfully.

“ And they are ?” asked Kate.

“ Their quick fancy, and unselfish nature.”

“ How do you make that out ?” said Winter.

“ First, the Saxon sees distinctly but one end or object, to the attainment of which his

every faculty is devoted. The Celt's livelier imagination presents him with half a dozen, at all of which he grasps with equal eagerness, and thus his powers are divided and dispersed. Secondly, a Saxon's first thought is of himself, and in this he is consistent; while, owing to the peculiarity of fallen humanity, the Celt's self-forgetfulness is inconsistent; thus, place a Saxon where you will, he possesses in himself a nucleus round which all his energies, hopes, and projects centre; and having a centre, stands. While the Celt works one day for himself, the next for a friend, the next to spite an enemy, the next to do him a service, and so he is, finally, nowhere. Your Saxon will have no objection to do all this in a lump, if it does not interfere with his own interests," and Galliard leaned back and took snuff.

"So," said Colonel Vernon, "our greatest errors spring from our noblest qualities!"

"The noblest qualities of mankind! It is man's fate!" returned Galliard.

“ You argue ingeniously ; but—” said Langley.

“ But truly,” interrupted Galliard. “ What was it chained the French nation to Napoleon ? Imagination ! What enabled Bruce to conquer Edward at Bannockburn ? Imagination ! What rivets the heart of the Irish peasant to the flattering demagogue, or arms his hand against his landlord ? Imagination !”

“ And the want of a Cogitative nose,” put in Winter.

“ There’s an upset for you, mounseer,” said Mr. Storey.

“ Really,” said Mrs. Storey, “ I think, Mrs. Winter, we had better leave the gentlemen to fight it out.”

They all rose.

“ And,” continued Galliard, as he opened the door, “ though the want of imagination may render the Saxon successful, its presence always makes the Celt beloved.”

“ You are right,” said Miss Vernon, as she passed him, with a bow.

But pleasant intervals soon come to an end, and the last week of Mr. and Mrs. Winter’s intended stay approached. Before it arrived, however, Miss Herman paid Kate a visit, and introduced her to some additional pupils, with whom, however, she agreed not to begin her lessons until after her friends’ departure.

“ I cannot bear to think of losing you,” said Kate, one cold, sharp evening, Winter had walked to meet her, on her way back from Brompton. “ Do pray put off your departure till after Christmas, I have so dreaded Christmas, alone in London, and you have nothing to hurry you away.”

“ Hum, let me see ; I have already delayed a fortnight longer than I intended, another week will not make much difference. Ha, you little witch, I cannot say you nay ; but after that not an hour.”

“ Ten thousand, thousand thanks, dear, kind friend ; you have made me so happy.”

“ Now we are *tete-à-tete*, tell me how affairs go on ; any news of the lawsuit ?”

“ Why yes, grandpapa gets frequent letters from Mr. Moore, who, it seems, is always filing bills, and making motions, very slow ones, I fear, for they never seem to produce any result.”

Winter groaned.

“ And yourselves ? how is—how is—you know I am a bear—how is the purse ?”

Marvellously, considering how fast your hundred went ; but nurse has got quite into the London ways, and quite saves us a fortune now ; and my pupils, and the new ones ! Oh, we shall do very well—if—if dear grandpapa only could look like his own old self.”

“ Well, I have thirty pounds of his I must not run away with. Have you Lady Desmond’s cheque ?”

“ Yes, quite safe.”

“ Well, be sure you keep it ; sickness may come, a thousand things. How is your lady cousin ?”

“ Quite well ; always, in her letters, talking of coming home, and never coming.”

“ Just as I expected.”

“ And you are bent on wintering at Pau ?”

“ Yes, and in the spring we intend crossing the Pyrenees ; I long to see more of Spain ; but, Kate, if you want me really, if, in short, illness should—that is, should the time ever come, you might want a home, Sue and myself look upon you as a daughter, write to me, at once, wherever I may be.”

“ Good God ! Mr. Winter, do you think grandpapa so ill ? do you anticipate—”

“ Dear child, no, a thousand times no ; but at parting I should like you to feel that it is only distance that can separate us, and that at any, and every time, I shall feel as a father towards you, and a proud father !”

“ My dear, dear friend ! surely God has

been very gracious to me ; I will not try to thank you in words, they sound so cold !”

They walked on in silence, which Winter broke, by exclaiming abruptly.

“ That letter of nurse’s son was most characteristic ! There is some good stuff in the writer.”

Then, after another pause, as if he had expected some remark from Kate.

“ It is odd Egerton should send it without a line ; I cannot make it out ; only that letters seldom miscarry, I should say he had written a despatch himself, independent of the other ; but pooh, that is highly improbable. Has Mrs. O’Toole replied to her son’s epistle ?”

“ Yes, that is I acted as her secretary, last week ; when do you think the letter will reach Dennis ?”

“ Oh, heaven knows, they are up the country, and, I fancy, not very settled ; perhaps in two or three months.”

Kate sighed.

“ Hey ! Miss Vernon, what was that sigh for ?”

“ Oh, I was thinking of last Christmas, we were a very pleasant party, though poor Captain, I mean Major Egerton, was so terribly in the blues about leaving England ; and now how different everything is ! how silently and gradually a great gulf has been opened between the past and the present !”

“ Well, well, it is melancholy enough, not to be either a pleasant or a profitable subject of cogitation. Forward, forward, as your favourite, Longfellow, says,

‘ Let the dead past, bury it’s dead,
Act, act, in the living present,
Heart within, and God o’er head !’ ”

“ A word in season, how good it is !” returned Miss Vernon, smiling pensively.

“ Well, here we are, I wonder what Mrs.

Winter will say to your powers of persuasion?"

"She will be delighted—she dreads the journey."

"Pooh, not she; as long as I am with her, she thinks all must go well."

"A pattern wife!" sighed Kate.

"Yes; no wife can be happy if she does not feel this. Ah, Kate, Kate, I wish you had a good husband!"

"Like yourself! eh, Mr. Winter! but alas!"

"Now, no quizzing, if you please! I'm glad we are at the end of our *trajet*, if you are going to laugh at me."

The gradually silent change in the Colonel's health and spirits, which had escaped the every-day watchfulness of even Kate's tender guardianship, struck Winter, whose perception was quickened by the, to him, unshaded transition from light to gloom, caused by the cessation of their daily intercourse, with grief and

dismay ; nor did he rest until he had persuaded his venerated friend to accompany him to an eminent physician, though the Colonel protested, he had not a single symptom of which he could reasonably complain. The doctor felt his pulse, looked at his tongue, and tried his lungs, asked a good many questions, seemingly irrelevant, as to his spirits, &c., wrote a short prescription, recommended horse exercise, took his fee, and bowed them out. Winter looked dissatisfied ; and as he handed the Colonel into the cab, which was waiting for them, suddenly recollected he had forgotten his snuff-box, he returned to the room, but in vain, for the bland physician merely repeated—“ Nothing physical, I assure you, sir—mental depression—imaginative disorder.”

“ Have you found your box ?” asked the Colonel, with a significant smile, at least, to Winter’s conscience it appeared so. The worthy artist reddened, and replied, gruffly, in the affirmative.

Kate never before felt so profoundly sad, as the day the Winters started for Dover. When she had parted from them at A——, there was the bustle and excitement of the journey, and the expected arrival at a new place, to divert her thoughts. Now she had full time to feel, how much alone she was, how much dependent on her own judgment, her own strength, her own efforts.

The travellers did not leave till after an early dinner, and the long, desolate evening, its usual occupations broken in upon and deranged, dragged its weary length slowly by, though the Colonel, by a brave effort, seemed more cheerful than usual, and talked of Paris, and the people he had known there, and of Bordeaux, and how the claret used to be smuggled into the west of Ireland, of Hoche, and of the French invasion. And Mrs. O'Toole brought in her work, and both endeavoured to keep up their darling's heart.

She could only remember that it was the

anniversary of Egerton's departure for India, and that to-morrow she was to give an early lesson to her new pupils.

“Good night, dearest grandpapa, and do not forget to take your bottle, you coughed a great deal to-day.”

CHAPTER IX.

TRIALS.

BEFORE entreating the reader to imagine the lapse of some months, unbroken by any event, we must record one which was a fertile theme of conversation and conjecture to our recluses. Kate was met by Mrs. O'Toole, almost at the garden gate, one morning, about a fortnight after the Winters had left them, as she returned from her daily perambulations.

“Och ! come in, Agra ! sure there’s great news entirely ! there’s the Captin’s been murthuring all afore him, in Ingee, an’ such a

tundherin' battle ! the masther's tired waitin' for ye."

" What's all this nurse is telling me, grand-papa ?"

" Oh, the Indian mail is in, and has brought an account of a hard-fought battle between our fellows and those desperate Sikhs. Egerton's name is most honourably mentioned. Langley has very kindly sent me the second edition of the "Times," there it is, read it for yourself."

And Kate, untying her bonnet, seized the paper, and throwing herself into the nearest chair, read the official account, which, dry as it was, sufficed to flush her cheek, and set all her pulses throbbing.

" Lieutenant Colonel A——, having been severely wounded in the beginning of the action, Major Egerton led the — Lancers, in repeated charges on the enemies' guns, which

were defended with a courage and determination indicative of European training ; but they were in the possession of the Lancers before four o'clock. I have great pleasure in drawing your lordship's attention to the conduct of this regiment generally, and in particular to that of the gallant officer in command, whom I beg to recommend to your lordship's notice."

" Ah, that is delightful ; I dare say Captain Egerton does not regret having gone to India now ! It does not say if he was wounded ? Are there any private letters ?" turning the paper in every direction.

" No, not until next mail, I fancy."

" What news for Mr. and Mrs. Winter," she continued ; " how he will rejoice, and grumble, and pooh, pooh, over it."

" Och, the crathure !" exclaimed Mrs. O'Toole, who, as usual, on any occasion of excitement, was always at hand ; " his soul 'ud niver rouse up at the word iv a fight ; he's not

got the blood in his vains for it. Sure, it's only the ould stock that's niver to say in rale pleasure, if they're not in the middle iv divilmint an' danger, jest look at Miss Kate's eyes, like two dimints, this minit. Though I'll go bail she's as white as a sheet at the sight iv a cut-finger, her heart's chargin the Sicks with the Captin. Sicks indeed! faith, he sickened thim sure enough; but it was on a boy's milk ye wor rared, avourneen, so it's no wondher."

"I do feel excited," said Kate, laughing; "some strange sympathy with—I do not know what! for in how many things I am a coward?"

"I believe it *is* the blood in your veins, Kate," returned the Colonel. "Nurse is right."

"Athen, if poor little Misther Gilpin, (the heavens be his bed,) was alive now, what a power iv rale sinse he'd talk about it; wouldn't he lay all the battles to the divil's door; well, they're terrible heart-breakin' things, entirely;

an' the dear knows where me poor Dinny is this blessed night—may be, asleep in a ditch, or—but faith, any ways he's alive, I feel that as sure as if I seen him livin' fornt me!"

The great news occupied many a circle beside that which we are attempting to describe, and day after day brought further particulars, private letters, and all the copious information so abundantly supplied by that fourth estate of the British Empire, the public press. In many of these, Egerton's name was mentioned, always with praise, often with enthusiasm ; his coolness and undaunted gallantry in some hand to hand encounters ; and the desperate stand made by the regiment he commanded, under great disadvantages, left an impression of something chivalrous and heroic, even on the minds of strangers. Kate, indeed, calling to mind the maxims of Winter, and the organist, sometimes felt that she ought not to feel so much delight in a courage that, after all, is generally shared by every healthy man ;

still, in spite of her reasoning, Egerton's image, invested with a prestige it never before possessed, constantly occupied her mind. Perhaps she did not know how dauntless was her own nature, and that there is irresistible attraction even to the most intellectual, in the courage, physical though it be, than can face death and danger, as if at home and at ease in the midst of both—this contempt of what it is natural to dread must partake more of the soul than philosophers allow, and is one certain element of greatness.

And so the winter slipped rapidly over; there was little to mark its flight; the constant sameness of occupation, without any incident to mark it, lent its wings to time; yet was it not all heaviness. A day of somewhat lighter spirits, and greater strength, would sometimes lend its brightening influence to the Colonel; and Kate revelled in the unwonted sunshine; or Langley would lend her some new work suggestive of much thought; and

clearing, for the moment, the mist which wraps itself round spiritual things, granting a passing glimpse, catching a faint echo of the glorious harmony with which all nature blends in the Great Creator's scheme of happiness ; and then the sameness or obscurity, which an hour before seemed oppressive in its meanness, acquired dignity from the thought, that it had its place allotted in the mighty whole. And she would turn with perfect content to bend her bright intelligence to the perfect comprehension and performance of those every-day duties which act to society as mortar to a wall, filling up the crevices, binding the unadhesive parts, and keeping the whole together.

Two months had fully elapsed, since the news of the battle of —— had reached England ; letters from the Winters had announced them safely settled at Pau, and charmed with it. And one cold, bleak evening, Kate was engaged arranging some lines she had selected from amongst many, written by Gilpin's sister,

to a very beautiful air bequeathed to her by the organist; the work did not progress as rapidly as it seemed, as her thoughts were divided by many mundane subjects, principally the necessity for looking out for cheaper lodgings.

“Nurse says it is so hard to manage; I must ask her to meet me to-morrow on my way home, and look for some other house—I mean rooms. I am afraid to mention it to dear grandpapa, he is so ill, and worn out with that dreadful cough—it is much worse to-day. How I wish Georgina would write! it is nearly a year since she invited us to join her at Florence, and talked of returning. Oh! how alone we are! I wonder shall I ever, ever live near my old friends, or among my own people again! God forgive the murmuring thought.”

And here her reflections were broken by the Colonel, who suddenly starting from an uneasy slumber, coughed with more than usual

violence ; then as Kate, with some vague idea of assisting him, flew to his side, it suddenly stopped, with a choking sound, and he fell back, the blood pouring from his mouth.

To summon nurse, to send for a doctor, was the work of a moment ; and before their anxious efforts to recal the Colonel to consciousness were successful, he arrived ; then there were innumerable questions to answer, and various restoratives to be procured ; and Kate had literally no time to feel the terror and dismay which afterwards rushed upon her mind.

The old man lay long insensible ; and it was during a pause, occasioned by the exhaustion of every remedy that could possibly be applied in haste, that he breathed faintly, at last, and opening his eyes, smiled, when he met those of his beloved grandchild. The doctor immediately forbade his speaking, and directed that every precaution for the preservation of extreme quiet around him should be taken.

“This is the great point,” he observed, when, after a lengthened visit, he was about to take leave. “I will write a prescription, and see it made up myself; he must take it every two hours, in a glass of port wine; but if he should be very sound asleep, do not disturb him; his strength must be kept up.”

Kate took her station by her grandfather’s bed-side. Nurse stationed herself in the next room; and the long watches of the night passed slowly over.

The Colonel lay motionless and deadly pale; but he did not sleep; for whenever Kate stole softly to his side, at the appointed times for his taking the medicine, he always, as if by instinct, opened his eyes; and who can tell, who can venture to depict the crowd of images, too vague for thought, too clear for dreams, which thronged Kate’s mind, as she sat listening now to each scarce audible breath, from the invalid, now to the loud beating of her own heart; it was not fear or sorrow that

seemed to hold her faculties in a strange tension, but an agonised absorption in the present danger, a dread, none the less intense because it was vague, that her darkest hour was at hand! connected prayer was out of the question; but frequent ejaculations for help, for strength, rose unconsciously to her lips. Towards morning, the Colonel sank into a quiet, profound sleep, and leaving nurse in charge of him, with directions to call her the moment he awoke, Kate threw herself into his vacant chair, and strove to still her throbbing pulses, and hush her troubled spirit to repose.

When she had left her grandfather's room, she thought sleep was too effectually frightened away by the terrors of the past night; but the strength and vigor of youth cannot be so soon unstrung, rest is too natural to that age; and, though it was disturbed, slumber stole over her unconsciously, and day had dawned fully, when, waking with a start, and feeling as though her short absence from him was a neg-

lect of a sacred duty, she stole softly and quickly to his room.

He had but just awoke, Mrs. O'Toole said ; and now lay gazing with a troubled expression in his eyes, towards the door. He smiled when he saw Kate, and his lips moved ; she stooped to hear, and he whispered, faintly but earnestly—“ Write—Georgina,” with a pause between each word.

“ I understand, dearest grandpapa,” said Kate, quickly, to relieve his evident anxiety. “ I will write to Georgina Desmond by this day’s post.”

And a look of greater contentment gradually composed the invalid’s countenance, which appeared so worn and haggard, that Kate’s eyes filled with tears every time she looked at him.

The doctor called early, and expressed himself quite satisfied with Kate’s account of the patient’s past night ; his pulse, too, was a little stronger.

“ Endeavour to keep him quiet, and free

from anxiety ; he is at present free from fever, and I should find some difficulty had we both fever and weakness to contend with ; do not let him talk much."

The day wore slowly over, like the night, diversified only by the writing of the promised letter to Lady Desmond ; and the Colonel seemed much easier when he was told it had been despatched.

Soon the cares and duties of the sick-room became matters of course ; the Colonel decidedly gathered strength. He was able to converse a little with his grandchild without much exhaustion ; and frequently made her read aloud to him. He never wearied of the Gospel of St. John, of the Psalms, and the seventh and concluding chapters of Revelation.

Nurse and Kate divided the night into two watches, the former taking the first watch, when the Colonel was most likely to sleep, and Kate, the remainder, to be ready with a few

sympathising words, when, after his broken sleep, his restless weakness caused him to move uneasily on his pillow; or to repeat in her low, soft tones, his favorite Psalms, and passages of the Gospels, when his eyes met hers with that anxious gaze which made her heart ache, so well did she understand its source. As for the apprehension of losing him, it was a thought on which she never dwelt for an instant. She felt instinctively, how utterly it would unfit her for the preservation of that calm, cheerful aspect so necessary to her beloved grandfather's well being; yet the terror-striking thought would press upon her mind in spite of all her efforts to repel it, when that troubled glance met hers by the dim, uncertain watch-light, and her lips almost of themselves whispered the words of comfort and of strength to which her heart turned, as much to still its own dread, as to calm the anxiety she feared would injure her grandfather!

Poor, faithful Mrs. O'Toole never told her

beads so fervently, and so often before; for loving both master and nurseling, she could fear for the future, to which Kate never gave a thought; her round, comely face faded from its bright rose to a yellowish tinge, and the corners of her mouth were drawn down lower than ever, while her aspirations to "Hester," and her denunciations of "Hester's stupidity," were rather increased than lessened in acerbity, as if to make up for the enforced softness with which they were whispered.

It was about a fortnight after the Colonel was first taken ill, and he had begun to ask anxiously for letters, when he astonished the doctor, by expressing a desire to get up, and go into the sitting-room.

"My dear sir, it is much too soon; do you feel greater strength?"

"Sometimes I think I am stronger, and sometimes weaker," replied the old man, with a sigh; "but I feel I should be quite as com-

fortable and quiet in my arm-chair, as in bed, and more cheerful, more like myself ; you may as well humour me," he added, with a sad smile, and paused, exhausted by so long a speech.

" Well," returned the doctor, after a prolonged feeling of his pulse, in order to give himself time to think, " perhaps, as you feel in this way, it may do you no harm ; wait till the day after to-morrow ; and take plenty of arrow-root, and wine, and beef tea, in the interval."

Kate could scarcely believe her ears, when she heard the welcome permission given ; she was not present when the Colonel asked for it, and considered it an undoubted proof of amendment. She looked so bright, and spoke so cheerily, when she announced the fact to nurse, that Mrs. O'Toole took courage to make a disclosure, she had withheld for several days.

" Ye know, Miss Kate," she began, her

apron folded round one arm, and rubbing the other hand confusedly up and down the table, “it’s three days since last Sathursday.”

“Yes, nurse. Well, what then?”

“Sathursday’s rint day, alanah.”

“Well, didn’t you pay Mrs. Crooks?”

“Why ye see, Miss Kate, what wid the sickness, an’ the arra-root, an’ the beef tay, an’ all that, though maisther Langley, the queen iv Heaven remimber it to him, sent in a sight of wine, what couldn’t be bought for money, the purse is niver out iv yer hand ; an’ to spake the thruth, Miss Kate, last Sathursday, there was a fortnight’s rint due ; I niver thought a Christhian would go botherin’ about sich a thrifle iv rint, an’ sickniss an’ sorra in the place ; but they’re quare Christhians here ! Sure they’d hand you their ‘little account,’ if ye were sayin’ mass for yer mother’s sawl ; it’s a long account some iv them will have to settle yet, any ways ! an’ that’s the way it is, Miss Kate.”

“ But, nurse, why did you let it go so far without—.”

“ Sure,” interrupted, Mrs. O’Toole, in a whisper, and pointing her finger towards the door, as a caution to extreme secresy, “ sure I hadn’t it, agrah ! d’ ye think I’d be wastin yer money payin that naggur iv a woman, an’ the dear masther wantin every thing ? ‘ Och, keep yer bills to yerself, woman,’ ses I, ‘ don’t be tasing Miss Vernon, an’ she breakin’ her heart, sure ye’ll be paid over an over as soon as she has time to write an ordher on the bank,’ ses I, an’ she kept quite a whole week, but to-day, she ses, ‘ The ould gentleman’s better,’ ses she, spakin small, as if she begrudged the words that would bring her ‘ no return,’ as they say, ‘ an’ I’ll spake to Miss Vernon meeself,’ ses she. Och, if I had mee own notes ye made Mr. Winter put in the savins’ bank out iv the way, I’d have paid her at wancet, an’ not be botherin ye.”

“Show me what you have,” said Kate, rather nervously.

“Mrs. O’Toole emptied the purse, she always kept ; a half sovereign and some silver was all that appeared.

“Ah,” said Miss Vernon, compressing her lips ; “and I have only five shillings. We must fill up that cheque ! How glad I am I kept it in my own desk !”

“What cheque, jewel ?”

“Oh, I forgot you did not know.”

And Kate hurriedly told Mrs. O’Toole of Lady Desmond’s generosity.

“Och ! then there’s the raale lady for ye ! none iv yer naggurs, sure it’s she has the right to do it any how. Wasn’t the Kurnel like a father to her, an it’s not every wan would remember it ; may the blessin iv heaven go with her ! faith we’re made up now, agrah, an how ’ill ye turn it into money ?”

“I will enclose it with a note to Mr. Langley, and he is so kind, I am sure he will get it

cashed (that is the word,) for me ; but, nurse, how much money ought I to write down, I do not like to put too much—twenty pounds ?”

“ Och ! botheration, Miss Kate, sure ye’re a babby about money. Twenty pounds is just a dhrop in the say, an’ sickness in the house, write fifty pounds asthore, when ye’re about it, God knows it’s not so easy to get the money.”

“ But fifty pounds, nurse, is such a large sum, I am afraid—besides, I am certain Georgy herself will be here immediately, as she does not write, she must be on the road home, and twenty pounds, I am sure, will do ‘till she arrives.”

“ Bother, be on the sure side, Miss Kate, an’ if she comes so soon, give her what’s left ; just do as I bid ye, asthore ; sure I know what’s wantin better than you do.”

“ Well, I suppose so, put on your bonnet, I will write to Mr. Langley at once.”

“ Wait a bit,” said Mrs. O’Toole, with an air of intense meaning ; she rung the bell ;

“ Hester,” as that functionary appeared, “ bring Miss Vernon her desk, out iv her room, I was tellin her, yer mistress wants her rint, an she’s goin to write an ordher on the bank ; I’ll post it meself. That ’ill do for Mrs. Crooks, I think, an’ I’ll give her a piece iv me mind to-morrow, about her English ways, as ——.”

“ No, no, pray do not, it would be both wrong and foolish, I am sure we have met such true friendship from English people, we may well have patience with a poor woman, who, after all, may want her money.”

“ Musha, God help yer heart ! She has twicet as much as you have, an’ what’s more, she needn’t be payin for what she can do for herself, an’ a lady mustn’t do ; well, well, it’s a quare world ; but any ways, the masther’s better, glory be to God.”

The Colonel persisted in his intention of getting up, on the appointed day, and though he almost fainted, when the transit to the

sitting-room was accomplished, he seemed more cheerful, at least he listened with more seeming attention and interest to Kate's conversation, for he was too weak to converse himself.

From this period, he rose, each day, about noon, and Kate was grieved to observe how much his anxiety about the past exhausted his little strength ; she asserted her conviction that Lady Desmond was on her homeward road, and though that generally quieted him for the moment, it was only to be done over again the next day.

Nurse kept watch at the hall door, to anticipate that dreadful short sharp knock, that has made, and will make, many a heart stand still with nameless dread ; and still Kate's daily report was—

“ The post has just come, dear grandpapa, no letters for us.”

So time slipped by, and both nurse and Kate began to share the Colonel's uneasiness, at

Lady Desmond's silence and non-appearance, though, of course, they suppressed all expression of it, before him.

At length, the post did bring a letter for Colonel Vernon, but it was from Winter, a few lines only, expressing surprise at Kate's long silence, and enclosing one directed to his care, for the Colonel. It bore the Southampton post-mark, and was from Fred Egerton. The Colonel was at first so much affected by the extreme disappointment he experienced at not receiving any letter from Lady Desmond, that was some before he desired to have Egerton's despatch read to him, not until he was fairly established in his easy chair, and recovered from the fatigue of dressing, which Kate noticed, sadly, continued the same from day to day, no visible improvement of strength taking place.

“Now, my love, let me hear this disappointing letter, though it is very ungracious in me to call it so.”

And Kate, who had had no time of late to think of Fred Egerton, felt her voice trembling with the strange gush of delight that filled her whole heart with a sudden and delicious life, when the long looked for writing met her eye, and which she had not yet succeeded in stilling.

The letter was too long for a full insertion here ; after expressing a hope that the Colonel's silence did not proceed from any intention to repudiate his acquaintance, and that he would not consider a *third* attempt at a correspondence importunate, Fred Egerton proceeded to give a short but clear description of the country round him, alluding briefly to the battle of ——, an account of which he supposed had reached them. He enquired kindly for the Winters, and said he had heard from Burton, (who had passed through A——, in the summer) of Gilpin's death, and that they (Colonel and Miss Vernon) had left the old city. I presume therefore that my last letter, as well as one I

enclosed for Mrs. O'Toole, from her son, were delayed in reaching you, if they ever did reach you. Pray remember me kindly to my good nurse ; many a time I have longed to hear her rich brogue near me, when I lay parched with fever. By the way, will you tell Miss Vernon, I am busily engaged training her foster-brother in the way he should go. I'll not say any thing of his past, but I anticipate great things for his future.

“ Well, the excitement of a battle is intense, and its horrors intense also ; should I meet Miss Vernon again, though, perhaps, she is no longer Miss Vernon, I shall be able to satisfy her curiosity about a battle.

“ Poor Colonel A—— died of his wounds, a fortnight ago. He was as fine fellow as ever breathed ; I was close by him when he fell, and I felt that a thousand of those infernal Sikhs would not make up for such a life. They say I am sure of the Lieutenant Colonely. Heaven and the Horse Guards only know. If

they will give it I will take it, and be thankful, but I have no money to purchase, and I will not ask Egerton's interest.

“ May I hope you will answer *this* letter, if it is not too much trouble ; perhaps Winter, if he is near you, will act as your amanuensis ; dare I suggest Miss Vernon ? I long for some news from my friends, for I feel anxious, somehow, since I heard you had left A——, and the old Priory. I have a sketch of it which I often set up before me as I smoke my last cigar, before turning in, to ensure pleasant dreams. Once more, my dear sir, pray write :

“ With the warmest esteem,

“ Faithfully yours,

“ Fred. B. Egerton.”

“ A kind, warm-hearted letter,” said the Colonel, at its conclusion, in the slow, faint tone, now usual with him. “ I am gratified to

find him so thoughtful of the past. Ah ! if—" he stopped.

" If what ?" asked Kate, carelessly, as she was re-reading the letter.

" Nothing, dear child," he returned, despondingly. " You had better tell nurse, she will like to hear of Denny."

" Glory be to God !" ejaculated Mrs. O'Toole, as Kate read the passage relating to her son, aloud. " An' so they're comin' home ?"

" No, dear nurse, Captain Egerton says, ' if I ever re-visit England.' "

" Well, sure it's all the same ; whin people niver intend a thing they niver talk iv it, but whin they begin to wish for it, they begin to talk iv it, an' whin they've talked a bit, they must do it."

The Colonel smiled at Mrs. O'Toole's logic. And not many minutes after the Doctor came in.

" Pulse very unsteady," said he, gravely

and interrogatively to Kate, “any disturbing cause?”

“He has been disappointed about a letter, he hoped to receive.”

“Ah, these letters are bad, very bad; he is not getting on as I could wish,” added the doctor to Mrs. O’Toole, as she followed him to the hall door to receive his parting instructions, “could you not get up some pious fraud about this letter? invent one, eh?”

“Oh, God bless ye, docther, it’s not possible, any ways, sure if it was I’m the woman would do it.”

“Well, I suppose so; but, I tell you, I dread another bursting of a blood vessel, and then.” The doctor paused, shook his head, drew on his glove, and departed in the teeth of a bitter March wind, and a cloud of dust.

“It seems a very cold, wretched day,” said the Colonel, as Kate took up her work; “is poor Cormac never let into the house now?”

“ Oh, yes, grandpapa, he generally lies outside the door, but I did not like to let him in for fear of disturbing you ?”

“ He would not disturb me, I wish to see him.”

Miss Vernon rose, and opening the door, admitted Cormac, who testified his joy at beholding his master, in a quiet, subdued manner, and the Colonel welcomed his faithful follower with a warmth, that Kate feared would be too much for his strength, stroking the dog’s head, feebly, from time to time, and gazing at him abstractedly, as if his spirit had flown back to the scenes and time, when he was still vigorous, and Cormac gambolled with all the vivacity of youth. Now the old hound sat grave and still, his dull, filmy eye returning his master’s gaze ; and Kate suppressed the deep sighs which rose from her heart, as she saw these old companions, side by side, thus changed, thus sinking in the unequal conflict with time and adversity ! And behind them memory raised the dark curtain of the present, and the bright, happy past

broke forth with more than its pristine freshness ; she saw those two languid forms, instinct with life, glowing with animation ; she heard her grandfather's clear musical laugh, ring forth as he sprang upon his favourite horse, and held him steady with a powerful hand ; she heard the hound's deep, joyous bark, as, after a few gambols round the impatient horse, he bounded forward in a swift and sudden race, only to return with headlong speed ; she saw her grandfather's stately form, with those of his high-born, gay companions, sweep round a bend of the avenue, and as the sound of their voices and the tramp of their horses died away in the distance, she heard the dash and roar of the restless Atlantic against the cliffs ; she saw the park-like lawn, the stately wood, the bold, blue hills and—a faint voice, like the echo of her grandfather's, from another world recalled her to the present.

“ Give Cormac, poor fellow, some bread and milk before he goes away.”

A few days passed, and still no letter. One evening, pleased to see the Colonel sleeping peacefully in his chair, Kate dropped her work and gave herself up to reverie. She had hardly had time to think of Fred. Eger-ton's letter, and the tone of warm remembrance it breathed.

“ I wonder shall I ever see him again ! Ah, no, what folly to think of it ! Yet if he was here, he would give grandpapa hope and courage, and to me ! he is so bright and strong. But thank God his letter came, with its cheering words, just when I most wanted something to raise my heart a litttle ! Nurse thinks he will come back, but that is only a dream ; and, after all, if he did, it would make no difference to me ! ”

Her thoughts rambled on in this way for some time, over many a varied topic, till she was roused by Cormac's very unusual efforts to gain admittance without leave. “ Well

come in, good dog, but be quiet," and the hound immediately placed himself by his master's chair; and Kate was speaking to him in a low voice, when the postman's knock, they had so long guarded against, but did not expect at that unaccustomed hour, shook the frail walls of the habitation, and Kate rose from her chair, trembling for her grandfather.

He woke suddenly, startled, but not so much as Kate had feared, and at the same moment nurse entered with a letter.

"From Georgina," cried Kate, opening it with trembling haste; she read aloud.

"Good heavens, dearest Kate, how unfortunate that I should have come here."

"She writes from Lucca.

"Your letter was not forwarded to me for ten days after I left Florence. I start tomorrow for England, and God grant the passes may not be snowed up; I hope to reach you as soon almost as this does; keep up your spirits; tell the Colonel I know his wishes,

I fully understand his anxiety for your writing. The courier waits for my letter. God bless you—Yours in haste and much affliction.—G. Desmond.' "

" What is the date ?" asked the Colonel, feebly.

" It has none, except the place ; she evidently writes in the greatest haste."

" Look at the cover."

" It is so rubbed and soiled I can make nothing out, but a 'Fir' and 'Marzo.' "

" She will be here to-morrow," said the Colonel, with sudden decision. " My God, I thank thee !" he murmured. " Kate, my love, I feel exhausted, some wine."

She flew to get it, and, after taking a little, he leaned back, drowsily, she settled the cushions for his head, and knelt down to feel if his feet were cold ; he stretched out his hand feebly, and laid it on her head ; the old hound, whom they had not noticed, drew closer, and

licked the hand that had so often caressed him.

“ God bless you darling, from the hour of your birth, you have been an unalloyed blessing to me.”

Kate rose, and kissed him fondly—

“ Go to sleep, dearest grandpapa.”

“ Yes, for she will be here to-morrow. I feel so happy, Kate !”

“ Thank Heaven !” she ejaculated ; and returning to her seat, watched the sleeper for some time, rejoicing to see an expression of almost heavenly happiness and calm gradually stealing over his features. The old hound, too, shared her vigil, laying his head couched on his fore-paws, his eyes fixed on his master. So she sat, sometimes, raising her heart to God, with a feeling of thankfulness, though she knew not why, except that she ever looked, in spite of her cooler reason, to Lady Desmond’s return as to a great deliverance.

The evening closed in, and still her grandfather lay in calm, unbroken repose. The old dog, at length, grew restless, he raised his head, and half rose up, as if to approach his master, and when Kate spoke to him, lay down again, with a low, complaining whine. Miss Vernon rung—

“I wish,” said she, as Mrs. O’Toole entered, “you would take Cormac away, I never saw him so troublesome before. I am afraid he will disturb grandpapa from that sweet sound sleep.”

“Come with me, Cormac.”

The hound wagged his tail, turning his dull eyes on her for a moment, but immediately re-fixing them on his master, with a watchful air, his ears erected, as if in expectation. Mrs. O’Toole crossed the room quickly, and stooping to look into the old man’s face, started back, clasping her hands, with an expression of awe and terror on her countenance.

“ Nurse !” exclaimed Kate, springing to her side ; “ what, what is the matter ?”

“ Hush, hush, mee own darlint child,” whispered Mrs. O’Toole. “ He’s not there—he’s with the blessed saints in Heaven !”

END OF VOL. II.



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